GOD'S WORLD-PROGRAM

FRANK STRONG

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God's Plans for Men and Their Consummation

BY

GRANT STROH

AUTHOR OF *"The Next World-Crisis," "His Glory," "Gabriel and Michael: Angels," etc.*

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DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF
THE FRIEND WHOSE CHARM OF
MANNER, RARE CULTURE, AND
HELPFUL FRIENDSHIP MEANT SO
MUCH TO THE AUTHOR IN THE
COLLEGIATE YEARS OF HIS LIFE

UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
1960

FOREWORD

Thoughtful minds will concede that we are not living in a world of chance. Things do not just happen. The orderliness of the world, whether in the cosmic or in the human realm, argues for the wisdom, the power, and the personality of God. Science now traces every event or achievement to an adequate cause. Just as an intricate machine that is perfectly adapted to do a marvelous piece of work points to a planning mind, so we conclude that man himself and the unfolding of human history point to an all-supervising Mind. God did not create man, place him upon this planet and give him a specially assigned work to do, without having a definite goal towards which all of the events of history are steadily and irresistibly moving.

Not only has God a definite goal in view, with specific plans for the attaining of that goal, but in His wisdom He has seen fit to reveal to man the program by which He is working. This program so vitally concerns man that he must needs know it in order that God may secure man's intelligent cooperation.

Both the convenience and the value of a definite

program are quite evident. With a printed program in one's hand it is simple and more interesting to follow the order of events, whether the program be for instruction or for mere entertainment. When a program covers a period of several days or weeks or even years, it is all the more necessary that the program to be staged be thoroughly announced beforehand, so that the order of events and the places of their occurrence may be unmistakably known. Otherwise the participants may not be prepared to take the parts assigned to them.

The Divine program for the world is not posted upon billboards to awaken the curiosity of the indifferent, nor is it anywhere confined to a single printed page. For the most part the program has been unfolded gradually to God's people at the beginning of each of the great epochs of sacred history for the special guidance of those who were to live during that particular period. In God's Word we have revealed not only the various sections of the program, but also the record of how the program pertaining to the past has been carried out. How clearly and fully, for example, is this true of what we call the Mosaic Age. At the commencement of that age God gave a detailed revelation of what He required of Israel. This is followed by the record of how at times they gloriously succeeded in carrying out this program for them, and also of how at other times they miserably failed.

In addition to the details of the Divine program at the beginning of each age, and for that age, we also may clearly discover the great outlines of the program in their forward sweep towards the final goal of human history. We do not have in our possession every minute detail of what is still in store for the world, but we have far more revealed than most Christians suspect. In addition to clear revelation of what is expected of the Church and the unmistakable forecast of her successes and failures, we have also the program outlines of how the Church Age is to end. Who shall deny that these are facts with which all Christians should be acquainted?

The following pages are written in the hope of making clear some of the more important facts and features of God's program for the world, with the prayer that each reader may at once assume the personal responsibility of carrying out his God-assigned part in the Divine program.

EVANGELICAL SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

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GOD'S WORLD-PROGRAM

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Chapter I

SEVERAL FUNDAMENTALS IN THE WORLD-PROGRAM

God is not dependent upon programs for He sees the end from the beginning. Yet in the carrying out of His purposes for the world it is necessary that He have pre-arranged plans. Knowing all things and having in view a definite goal, would it be possible even for God to work without a program in mind? God never works in the dark. "He knoweth the way that he taketh." God's world is a world of order. Otherwise catastrophe and failure.

THE NEED OF DEFINITE PLANS

To achieve a definite goal definite plans must be carefully conceived and definite arrangements made to meet certain conditions or to overcome certain foreseen obstacles. Our God is not a haphazard God. If in our own short labors we recognize the

necessity of carefully prepared plans, how much more comprehensive and complete must be the all-embracing plans of God for the accomplishment of His vast and eternal purposes.

A rightly proportioned building, revealing beauty and harmony in every line, is proof of the intelligence and skill of the architect. Likewise we argue that God would not have placed man upon this earth without having in mind a certain definite program for man in relation to himself and His universe. It is inconceivable that God is not working according to a definite program for man.

The necessity of a world-program, however, is not so much for God as for us. Our limited visions of the future specially require that we be Divinely guided with reference to it. If God has a definite program for His people, and if His people are to co-operate intelligently in carrying out that program, it must be revealed to them. We must know what God wants us to do and when He wants it done. This we can know only as He tells us.

THE PROBABILITY OF A WORLD-PROGRAM

Man is unable to make a program that extends very far into the future, for he knows not what even one day may bring forth. Knowledge of the future, especially the remote future, is the prerogative of God alone. His challenge to-day to men, as in the

days of Isaiah, is, "Show us things to come. Declare the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods." This challenge no man dare accept.

Man, unaided, knows nothing of the future, and hence can make no plans for the future that will unfailingly come to pass. Only God is the absolute disposer of events. First of all He alone knows the future. We recall how His covenant with Israel involved His revealing the future to them: "Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare; before they spring forth I will tell you of them." Isa. 42:9. "And who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I established the ancient people? and the things that are coming, and that shall come to pass, let them declare. Fear ye not, neither be afraid; have I not declared unto thee of old, and showed it? and ye are my witnesses." Isa. 44:7, 8.

This program for Israel was revealed both at Mt. Sinai (Lev. 26) and again to the new generation forty years later. Deut. 28 and 30:1-10. Hence in the days of Isaiah God could appeal to the people as witnesses to the existence of the program as thus far revealed and accomplished. Whenever the 103rd Psalm was sung the people were reminded that God had "made known his ways unto Moses, and his acts unto the children of Israel." Furthermore, the probability of a Divine program for their

own guidance was assumed by Israel: "Surely the Lord Jehovah will do nothing, except he reveal his secrets to his servants the prophets." And if God had a clearly revealed program for Israel, why not for the race? Why not for His Church?

THE FACT OF A WORLD-PROGRAM

Not only is there an inherent necessity in a world of order that God should have a definite program in mind, and not only is there the probability of such a program, but the fact of the existence of such a program is clearly revealed both in His Word and in the unfolding of history. A world-program is not a matter of mere inference, but a matter of abundant evidence. The purposes of God for man are matters of record, and the evidence is two-fold. Upon the one hand are definite promise and prophecy which relate to coming events, many of which belong to the entire course of human history. While upon the other hand we have authentic record of the actual fulfilment of the greater part of that prophecy. These matters we shall consider in their proper places. Meanwhile of this one thing we may be certain: "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world."

Not only does God know His own works before they come to pass but He has revealed them to men: "I have declared the former things from of old; yea,

they went forth out of my mouth, and I showed them; suddenly I did them, and they came to pass." "Before it came to pass I showed it thee." "I have showed thee new things from this time, even hidden things, which thou hast not known." Isa. 48: 3, 5, 6. As the need has arisen new revelations and new unfoldings of God's world-program have been given to men for their counsel and guidance. Not always in minute detail, but with sufficient fullness that in every period of the unfolding of the program God's people have clearly known what was expected of them. The fullness of the revelation is apparent as we view the program as a whole.

At the beginning of our study together, then, let us stabilize our minds and rest our hearts upon God. The disorder in the world about us, the seeming failure of righteousness and the momentary triumphs of evil, are not beyond the sweep of God's program. His purposes cannot be thwarted nor His program for man's ultimate good be overthrown.

Chapter II

OBJECTIVE OF THE PROGRAM

God's program for man has a clearly defined objective. God is working continuously towards a definite goal, although many centuries may intervene between the making of the plans and the realization of them. Just as the blue-prints of the architect look forward to the completed structure, so the plans of God for the world forecast the accomplishing of all of God's purposes for the redemption of man and his secure establishment upon the new earth.

MAN'S DOMINION OVER THE EARTH

God's original plan for man included his headship over all things upon this planet. Although man forfeited his rulership because of his own subjection to Satan, God's purpose for man has not been changed. His objective is still the same so far as man's place upon this earth is involved. God still intends that man shall have supreme dominion over all the earth, and that man himself shall be in complete and willing subjection to God.

God's purpose for man to rule the earth in conjunction with himself was greatly complicated be-

cause of the entrance of sin and the consequent failure of man, but God had made provision beforehand even for man's sin. The consequences were fully covered in the original program. Before man was created God knew that man would sin, so He put into His program ample provision for it. Christ was the Lamb "slain from the foundation of the world."

AN IDEAL GOAL

Through sin the world was wrecked. Hence the Divine program must provide for a complete recovery and restoration. All traces of the tragedy of sin must be completely wiped out. The restoration of all things was put into the program from the beginning. Every picture of the goal towards which all history is moving is a picture of ideal conditions for men and for the earth. Not simply restoration of pristine conditions is planned, but the reaching of a goal for man which is immeasurably in advance of Eden. Whether we turn to the Psalms, Prophets, Gospels, Acts, Epistles, or the Apocalypse the final state of both man and the earth is found to be perfect in every respect. The curse is to be removed from man and beast and the earth itself. Man is to be brought back into filial obedience to God and again be associated with Him in the administrative affairs of the Kingdom. The earth is to be renovated and filled with surpassing beauty and abundance.

Wars are to cease, righteousness and peace are to prevail throughout the earth, and man himself made a being worthy of the acme of God's creation, a being like unto Jesus Christ, for we are called to be conformed unto His image.

Religious, political, social, and cosmic conditions will be perfect. When God's program is fully carried out the best conceivable conditions will be established where now exist imperfection and ruin. Instead of want and greed, suspicion and hate, crime and sorrow, will be abundance and peace and joy and love.

A PROGRAM OF HOPE

The objective of God's program is intended to awaken men to joyful hope. To-day a spirit of despondency is gripping the hearts of many who see only catastrophe ahead. Catastrophe may come, will indeed be necessary in order to hasten the completion, but God is equal to every crisis. The perfect goal will be attained.

Various stages of progress mark the course of God's dealings with man. For example, a consummation is predicted in connection with the returning of Christ in glory; but the final consummation will not be reached until the present order of things passes completely away and God brings into being the new heaven and the new earth. These are among

the final objectives. For the new man restored to God, made like unto Him, the inclination to sin removed, God will provide an entirely new and perfect environment in which will dwell the perfected race.

Chapter III

SCOPE OF THE PROGRAM

A program that has in view the accomplishment of such vast purposes, including the complete redemption of man and the restoration of an earthly Paradise, must be all-embracing. A short-sighted, weak, or insufficient program would certainly fail to accomplish the vast and eternal objectives of God. Just as great military campaigns have failed because all details and emergencies were not cared for, or the required equipment or food-supplies underestimated, so would the incomparable objectives of God fail if His plans were not sufficiently comprehensive in scope and complete to the last detail.

A RACIAL PROGRAM

God's program for man embraces all men in all ages. It is a world-program, both geographically and chronologically. Not only were the Israelites included but "all families" and "all nations." God's dealings are with the entire race. If particular individuals or companies of men seem to have been specially favored, it has been always with all other men in view. If one man or nation has been Divinely chosen and blessed it was to the end that all men

and nations would be blessed eventually. God is not a partial God. He is not sectarian or national in His interests, especially in His world-program. His love embraces the world and so does His program.

God's program is perpendicular as well as horizontal. It descends into all strata of society. The lower levels of society are quite as important to God as the upper crust. Indeed, if numbers count, the regeneration of the middle and lower levels is more important than that of the higher strata. God plans equally for all.

The world-program is also chronologically complete. It embraces all history. Everything is in the present tense with God, the end of the program as well as the beginning and the middle. God has planned for the millennial man as well as the antediluvian man. No age has been overlooked. Each plays an important part in the program. Each is essential to the program.

MAN'S ENEMY CONQUERED

Finally any program that has in view the best interests of man must include God's dealing with man's greatest enemy. Ever since man's first sin he has been more or less under the dominion of Satan. Hence God's far-reaching plans for man must look forward to the time when the power of Satan is completely broken and man made forever free. This

was promised to Adam and Eve when God said that the Seed of the woman should bruise the Serpent's head. The promise is having partial fulfilment now and will have enlarged fulfilment at the beginning of the Kingdom Age, when Satan shall be bound. Its complete fulfilment awaits the end of the Kingdom Age.

God's plans for man would be defective also if they failed to consider man's inability to cope with Satan on account of a nature and a will that have become weakened by sin. In his weakness man needs help. At his best he still is exposed to the attacks of the Adversary and frequently overcome. About him and above are "spiritual hosts of wickedness" with which he must contend, but against which God has made provision. There is a Divinely provided armor which fully protects us from all attacks of evil spirits. But at best victory over Satan and his emissaries is limited to the few at the present time. Christ gave authority "over all the power of the enemy" to only a few in His day. That circle has been greatly enlarged in our day, but there is a good time coming when universal dominion in the spiritual realm will be experienced by mankind.

VICTORY OVER COSMIC AND OTHER FORCES

At the present time also man is largely at the mercy of the great cosmic forces about him, above

him and beneath him. Lightning and earthquake, fire and flood and cyclone often play havoc. When these forces are loosed man is powerless before them. Such things are not always to be. In Paradise restored we cannot conceive of man being at their mercy.

Likewise, "in the times of the restoration of all things," shall man be subject to the unseen attacks of countless microscopic animals which silently deal their death-blows, and against which man seems to have no adequate protection? Either the nature of these accursed diminutives must be changed, or man be made immune from their ferocious attacks, when the ideal earth is brought into subjection to man.

Thus we see that many things must be included in a world-program for man, if it be sufficiently comprehensive to deal with all of man's problems and man's enemies. However many they may be we can believe that God's wisdom, foreknowledge, and power are sufficiently inclusive to accomplish all these things and victoriously prevail in the end.

Chapter IV

ADEQUACY OF THE PROGRAM

A program that is sufficiently comprehensive in its scope might still be a failure. We need to ask another question: Is God's program for man adequate? Will it accomplish its objective? The very asking of the question helps us to answer it. Whose program is it? Is not God able to make effective that which He has planned? Has not God the resources and the power to carry out His own purposes?

NO FAILURE WITH GOD

God has given His own answer and assurance: "Jehovah of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely, as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand." Isa. 14:24. God, who in infinite wisdom can plan, can also in infinite power execute. No purpose or program of God can fail. He will bring to consummation every wish of His heart and every way of His will.

Yet some who ought to know better look upon God's program as already having failed in several particulars. For example, they speak of Judaism as a failure, of Christianity as a failure, and of man

as a failure. Back of all such statements is belief in the failure of God and ignorance of His program as a whole. Man may fail as in the past, and the Church may fail, but God's program continues to move forward. It may be delayed but can not be frustrated. Would that all men had the confidence of Job, who declared, "I know that thou canst do all things, and no purpose of thine can be restrained."

It is the unexpected that often upsets even the best of programs, but God never is surprised. He has provided for every emergency. For example, sin entered the world and God's plans for man seemed to be overthrown. Not so; before sin entered God had planned its remedy. Again, recall King Saul. So full of promise as the ideal king, he became proud and self-willed; but God had a better man in reserve to take his place. God also foresaw and predicted that the Chosen Nation itself would foresake Him and turn away to the worship of false gods; but to foresee that apostasy was also to provide for it. There can be no surprise or failure with God.

THE GOD OF EMERGENCIES

Our God is a God of emergencies. He can never be caught off-guard or unprepared. Mordecai had this confidence in God in a time when the mightiest monarch on earth had consented to a plot to destroy the Jewish nation. You recall Mordecai's memorable

words to Queen Esther, who was hesitating about interceding with the king in behalf of her people: "Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews. For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall relief and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place."

Mordecai was familiar with God's program for His people, and he well knew that the program contained no word about the total destruction of the Jewish nation. Since it was essential that God preserve the nation in order to carry out His revealed purpose for them and for the world, Mordecai knew that in some way He would accomplish their deliverance in that hour of peril. And in these days of uncertainty and peril it is a mighty comforting thing to know just what God's program for the Church is. It gives confidence and steadiness in times of confusion and danger.

TWO REQUISITES

The adequacy of a program that provides for the attainment of a definite goal depends upon two things: First, is complete foreknowledge upon God's part of all difficulties, obstructions, and exigencies which might arise to prevent the carrying out of the program; and secondly, the possession of the resources necessary to meet every difficulty, overcome

every obstacle, and equal every emergency. God's foreknowledge of coming events will care for the first requirement, and His control of all the forces and resources of the universe will cover the second. The program for man which God has arranged is fully adequate for the accomplishment of all that God has had in mind from the beginning.

Chapter V

RACIAL CHARACTER OF THE PROGRAM

God's program is not narrow or local, but racial. His interest is not limited to the Chosen People or to the Church. In all of His plans He has in view the entire race and the whole earth. This phase of the Divine program should never be lost from view.

The first unfolding of God's plans for man was at a time when man greatly needed help. Man's sin had brought unexpected and utter ruin. Facing an unknown future upon which the curse of God rested, it was a fitting time for God to reveal to man somewhat of His program for the race, for in that program was the promise of ultimate victory over Satan and of man's final restoration to God.

AS REVEALED TO ADAM

The outstanding features of the program as revealed to Adam and Eve involved physical pain and sorrow for the woman and her subjection to man. For the man were thorns and toil and sweat. In the end a return to dust for both. Spiritual death, or separation from God, followed immediately. Physical death would also certainly follow in due time.

The world's cemeteries are a silent testimony to the sentence of death that followed the entrance of sin into the world. Death reigned from Adam to Moses and its sway has never been broken. The funeral dirge sounds above all other sounds of earth. Death, death! Millions upon millions every year unwillingly testify to the awful fact that the body is subject to death because of sin. "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return." Nobody can question that for Adam and all of his descendants this part of the program is being fulfilled.

Prior to death another feature of the program is still in force. Man was not only to die, but before death would come toil and sweat. A certain amount of labor is a benefit and a joy. This Adam experienced in Eden. But sin entails excessive labor. Such has been the history of the race. The curse upon the ground has made toil necessary. For the vast millions of mankind life is drudgery. Incessant toil is the price that keeps multitudes from starvation every day. Other multitudes die from the over-taxation of worn-out bodies and worn-out brains.

Womankind well know the awfulness of the curse caused by sin. Hers was not only toil but also subjection and pain. First man's tempter then man's slave. The weaker vessel became degraded and oppressed. Might took advantage of weakness. This probably is one of the darkest results of the Fall. In heathen lands to this day woman is the victim, the

slave, the beast of burden, often forbidden even to eat with her husband, and usually denied a share in his pursuits and pleasures. Add to these the social and domestic duties of women, the pain and sorrow of bearing children, and we have indeed a dark picture of the predicted program for womankind. Only in lands where men have been made new creatures in Christ has the curse of sin upon woman been changed into consideration, love, and equality.

The fact that these conditions of toil and trouble are not confined to any one country or race ought to have great significance. The program as revealed to Adam disregarded all ethnographic, geographic and chronological features. It embraces the entire race. The curse was all-inclusive for the period it was to be enforced. Praise the Lord, the curse will one day be removed!

Although mankind was to toil and suffer and die, this was not to be his goal. The victory of Satan over man was to be followed by final defeat of the Serpent. This was the hope held out. The Serpent has indeed bruised the heel of the Seed of the woman, but her Seed will yet bruise his head. The first part of this section of the program has been literally fulfilled. Christ came, born of a woman, and suffered seeming defeat at the hands of Satan, but it was only seeming. The very cross of Christ has become an emblem of victory. It was the beginning of Satan's downfall. His head will certainly be bruised

and he will yet suffer total defeat at the hand of the Seed of the woman. This is the preëminent fact in the racial program. Already the race has begun to share in the victory of Christ over Satan; but this is only a foretaste, an earnest of the complete and final victory.

AS REVEALED TO NOAH

The Adamic Age ended in disaster. The descendants of Adam completely corrupted themselves and were destroyed in the overwhelming Flood, after which there was need of new prophetic light. God's program for the future revealed new elements. One of these was that never again would God destroy the world by a Flood. The rainbow is the token of that covenant. God beholds it and remembers in mercy.

Another element in the Noahic program is that civil government is now introduced. Special provision is made for murder. That needed checking at once. In the preceding age Cain had been permitted to go free. God's plan for that age was to allow sin to develop unchecked in order that man might know its awfulness; but after the Flood a new law was introduced. The murderer was to be put to death, and the executioner was to be man. By the new law a two-fold purpose was served. First, the course of crime was immediately checked, and second, the awfulness of it was emblazoned upon society because

man had to bear the sword of the executioner. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man." The solemnity of this element in the program is most impressive.

We would call attention to only one other thing in the Noahic program and that is the racial history as forecast in the three sons of Noah. Growing out of the incident of his own sin came the prophetic outline of the historic course of his sons, each of which was sharply defined. Millenniums of history have transpired since this prophetic forecast was given, but to-day its fulfilment is plainly recognized.

Thus was the program revealed:

"Cursed be Canaan;
A servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.
Blessed be Jehovah the God of Shem;
And let Canaan be his servant.
God enlarge Japheth,
And let him dwell in the tents of Shem;
And let Canaan be his servant." Gen. 9: 25-27.

The outstanding features of this history, which were corroborated in Chapter X, are that the descendants of Ham, especially the Canaanites, would form the servile races; that to the Shemites would belong religious supremacy; that the Japhites would

be famous for their vast enlargement, attended by commercial and political dominion. This is the usual interpretation, but other prophecies reveal that ultimately Shem will have political as well as religious supremacy.

From Shem Abraham descended. This is the line of the Chosen Seed. A branch of the Shemites was to become the conservators of the true religion of Jehovah and transmit its knowledge to the remainder of the world. All of the monotheistic religions of the world came through Abraham, and thus through Shem. In a distinctive sense Jehovah has been his God, for the Saviour of the world came through him. This was the most distinctive feature of the Noahic program.

AS REVEALED TO ABRAHAM

When God called Abraham, separated him from his kindred, and entered into the Covenant of Blessing with him, He distinctly said that His purpose was to bless all of the families and all of the nations of the earth. In choosing Abraham God was not showing favoritism, but merely selecting the channel through which He might most effectually extend His blessing to the remainder of mankind.

In Abraham's day most men already had forsaken the primitive monotheistic faith of the race and idolatry threatened to blot Jehovah out of remembrance.

Archæological researches reveal the universality of rank polytheism and gross idolatry in the land of Chaldea, the early home of Abraham, and also in the land of Canaan to which he journeyed. Equally true was this of Egypt. Individuals here and there, like Melchizedek and Job, still maintained the worship of the living God, but the race as a whole refused to have God in their knowledge and chose to worship and serve the creature rather than the Creator. But although God seemed to abandon them He did not wholly give them up. Instead He purposed and planned to reach them through the single family of Abraham.

The Divine program as revealed to Abraham embraced specific features and far-reaching purposes. His seed was to be the Chosen Seed. God would make of him a great nation and a company of nations. To him and to his seed was the unconditional gift of the Chosen Land and its perpetual ownership. All peoples of the earth were to enjoy Divine blessing or cursing upon the basis of their relationship to Abraham and their treatment of his seed; but ultimate blessing for all would finally prevail.

The Chosen Family was to be marvelously multiplied and to become as the sand upon the seashore and as the stars of heaven. It was to be characterized by unusual fecundity and to increase with surpassing rapidity. In the present, as in the past, this is a remarkable characteristic of the Jewish race.

The present world-wide dispersion of the seed of Abraham is in line with God's purposed blessing of all the families of the earth. When the veil that now lies upon their heart is taken away and they accept Jesus as their Messiah the original purpose of God to make them the great channel of blessing to the world will be accomplished. While it is true that through Christ blessing already has come to the Gentiles, this is only a foretaste of the fullness of blessing when the Chosen Nation is again grafted into its own olive tree. They are the natural branches. Through Israel as a nation God is yet to enrich the Gentile world with an abundance hitherto unknown. Their present world-wide dispersion forecasts their world-wide mission in the future.

AS REVEALED IN THE PSALMS

The Second Psalm portrays the reign of God's Son over all nations. To Him the Father has said, "Ask of me, and I will give thee the nations for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." This subject of universal kingship is continued in the Forty-fifth, Forty-sixth and Forty-seventh Psalms. The latter Psalm closes with,

> "The princes of the peoples are gathered together
> To be the people of the God of Abraham;
> For the shields of the earth belong unto God;
> He is greatly exalted."

We take only a few of the statements here and there merely to show the racial scope of God's program:

"He maketh wars to cease unto the ends of the earth;
Be still and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." Ps. 46:9, 10.

"Let the peoples praise thee, O God,
Let all the peoples praise thee.
Oh, let the nations be glad and sing for joy;
For thou wilt judge the people with equity,
And govern the nations upon earth." Ps. 67:3, 4.

"He shall have dominion also from sea to sea,
And from the river unto the ends of the earth."

"Yea, all kings shall fall down before him;
All nations shall serve him." Ps. 72:8, 11.

It is surely significant that this highly devotional book should be so full of passages descriptive of blessings extended to the Gentiles.

AS REVEALED IN THE PROPHETS

Isaiah is especially rich in its Gentile element: "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; my Chosen, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the Gentiles." 42:1. "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else." Isa. 45:22. "It is too light a thing that thou should-

est be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou may be my salvation to the end of the earth." Isa. 49:6. "The Holy One of Israel is thy Redeemer; the God of the whole earth shall he be called." Isa. 54:5.

The final goal in the Divine program is a redeemed and glorified earth. Such is the uniform voice of the prophets whenever they touch upon ultimate conditions. This striking passage from Micah will illustrate: "But in the latter day it shall come to pass that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and peoples shall flow unto it. And many nations shall go and say, Come ye, let us go up to the house of Jehovah, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us his ways, and we will walk in his paths." This is not a picture of Gospel times but of the Kingdom Age, when law and justice shall be administered from Jerusalem and wars shall cease to the ends of the earth. The Divine program is neither Jewish nor Christian, but racial.

Chapter VI

PLACE AND PART OF THE CHOSEN NATION IN THE PROGRAM

No one who reads the Bible can fail to be impressed with the prominence given to the Chosen Nation. Beginning with the family of Abraham at the close of the eleventh chapter of Genesis, two thousand years before Christ, the remainder of the Old Testament has to do chiefly with the Nation of Israel. Almost equally conspicuous is the place of the Jews in the New Testament. Following the return of Christ to heaven the Church comes gradually into prominence, but the Jewish nation is never completely lost from view.

THE MIRACLE NATION

Attention frequently has been called to the miracle of the Jewish nation and how its racial characteristics have persisted through the centuries. Everywhere and always the Jew is a Jew. Unlike other immigrants he is not absorbed by the peoples among whom he has come to dwell. His power to resist assimilation is one of the marvels of history. Truly he dwells apart and is not numbered among the nations, as so long ago foretold by God.

Another miracle of the Jew has been his power of persistence. Persecuted, pillaged, plundered, ostracized, murdered, what other people so helpless and few in numbers could have withstood all these things and to-day be stronger numerically, financially and industrially than ever before in their history?

THE FOREMOST NATION

Only as we understand the place of Israel in God's own program can we understand his past history and his present growing power and ascendancy in the industrial and the financial worlds. When the nation was brought up out of Egypt to Mt. Sinai God declared His purpose concerning it: "Ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation." Ex. 19:6. "And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people." Lev. 26:12. If they would remain loyal to Him, Jehovah would set them "on high above all the nations of the earth." Deut. 28:7. In relationship to other nations it was said of Israel, "And thou shalt lend to many nations, and thou shalt not borrow. Jehovah will make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and not beneath." Deut. 28:13. They were to be "high above all nations that he had made in praise, and in name, and in honor; and that thou mayest be a holy people unto Jehovah thy God." Deut. 26:19. Religious, commercial, and political

supremacy! In these respects the nation of Israel was to occupy a unique place in God's world-program.

CHASTISEMENT OF THE NATION

In preparing His program God foresaw that the Chosen Nation would not remain true to their covenant, would not keep His laws, and would turn away from Him and serve other gods: "And Jehovah said unto Moses, Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers; and this people will rise up and play the harlot after the strange gods of the land, whither they go to be among them, and will forsake me, and break my covenant which I have made with them." Deut. 31 : 16. It seemed unbelievable, but God knew. Therefore before they entered the Chosen Land God forewarned them of repeated and severe chastisements in case of their failure. In the sections containing these forewarnings we can see now the outline of the entire history of the Jewish nation. Whether we take the one in Leviticus (Chapter 26) or in Deuteronomy (Chapters 28 and 33) we have the same pre-written history. Both the blessing and the curse were set clearly before the nation and it chose the latter. As the result we find them to-day in the lands of their enemies, where they are being chastised for their sins.

Marvelously and clearly their present condition

and experiences were portrayed: "And you I will scatter among the nations, and I will draw out the sword after you; and your land shall be a desolation, and your cities shall be a waste." Lev. 26:33. "And thou shalt be tossed to and fro among all the kingdoms of the earth." Deut. 28:25. "And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word, among all the peoples whither Jehovah shall lead thee away." Deut. 28:37.

These forecasts of the Jewish program were made prior to their entrance into the Promised Land. The one given to the nation by Christ in person fifteen hundred years after occupancy of the Land completes the picture of their present chastisement. The culminating sin of the nation was the rejection and crucifixion of their Messiah. They knew not the day that belonged to their peace. Luke 19:41. Therefore Jesus declared, "And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led captive into all the nations." Luke 21:24. All of these things have come upon them. But God's complete program for them has not yet been fulfilled.

REPENTANCE AND RESTORATION

So long as the Chosen Nation kept the Law of Moses it was marvelously prospered, but curses followed upon their disobedience. However, the program calls for final repentance and restoration. God

promised not to forget them when dispersed among the nations: "And yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them, neither will I abhor them to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them; for I am Jehovah their God; but I will for their sakes remember the covenant with their ancestors, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt in the sight of all the nations, that I might be their God; I am Jehovah." Lev. 26: 44, 45. This is the sole explanation of the miracle of their preservation.

Faithless indeed were God's people, yet truly "God hath not dealt so with any nation." Marvelously beloved and delivered and blessed and prospered, yet how undeserving, ungrateful, and utterly perverse. No nation so exalted, yet no nation so abased. Scattered among the peoples and left few in numbers among the nations, just as God said they would be. Surely this is the finger of God. But this is not all. The end of the program has not been reached. Two sections still belong to the future.

First of all comes the repentance of Israel: "But from thence ye shall seek Jehovah thy God, and thou shalt find him, when thou searchest after him with all thy heart and all thy soul. When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, **in the latter days** thou shalt return unto Jehovah thy God and hearken unto his voice: he will not fail thee,

neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he sware unto them." Deut. 4: 29-31.

RETURN OF THE NATION

Following Israel's return to God will be the return to their Land; for the covenant to which Jehovah refers is the covenant of blessing which included the Chosen Land with Israel in possession of it. Take for example the picture with which the thirtieth chapter of Deuteronomy opens. It portrays the joyous time following both national blessing and curse, and also their return to Jehovah: "Then Jehovah thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the peoples whither Jehovah thy God hath scattered thee . . . *and will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good and multiply thee above thy fathers.*"

THE MISSIONARY NATION

God's program for the nation of Israel included His purpose to bless all other nations through Israel. Many have interpreted the "seed" of Abraham as applying only to Christ. Christ indeed was of the Seed of Abraham according to the flesh, but He was not

the sole seed. Through Him all the nations of the world are being blessed, but the fullness of blessing can come only through Israel when fully restored to God. At the present time partial blessing is coming to the Gentiles through the Church, during the time of Israel's present rejection as a nation; but the Apostle Paul argues that "if their rejection is the riches of the world, and their loss the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fullness?" Again, "For if the casting away of them is the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?" Rom. 11:12-15. "And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests." This was part of the Divine covenant when God constituted the nation at Mt. Sinai. In their moments of highest elevation the people often rose to a realization of the meaning of their priesthood. Take for example the Sixty-seventh Psalm:

> "God be merciful unto us, and bless us,
> And cause his face to shine upon us;
> That thy way may be known upon earth,
> Thy salvation among all nations.
> . . . . . .
> God will bless us;
> And all the ends of the earth shall fear him."

Israel never yet has fulfilled this part of God's program. The very sense of her mission to the nations was lost. The reluctance with which Jonah became

a missionary to the Ninevites was typical of the attitude of the nation towards the Gentiles. When God's Spirit is again poured out upon the priestly nation it then will fulfil its religious mission to the Gentiles. Present partial blessing through Christ during His absence from the earth will give place to fullness of blessing during His undisputed reign over the earth. The Chosen Nation will yet become the Missionary Nation.

FUTURE BLESSING

As the present dispersion of the Jews among the nations is accredited to God, so also will be the regathering and establishing of them again in their own land. At the present time we are beholding a revival of the Jewish national consciousness and also a revival of interest in Palestine. Many are returning; but this is a return in unbelief. The regathering which God is to accomplish for them will follow their repentance and return to Him as their God and will occur in the time of their great tribulation, "the time of Jacob's trouble." This is still future.

The feature of the Divine program for Israel which is of greatest interest to us is the unfolding of it that pertains to the future. If we were to have regard only to the present condition of the Chosen Nation we must conclude that God's program for them is a miserable failure. Without any question God

planned most wonderful things for the Chosen People, and if we are to judge only from their past or present history He has failed to accomplish His purposes for them. And if His program for the Jews has failed, why may not His program for the Church also fail? If God has not been able to meet all the emergencies that have arisen in connection with His program for Israel, what guarantee have we that He will not also fail in carrying out His program for the Church?

In the case of the nation of Israel God has not failed. The most important part of His program for his earthly people has not yet been put into operation. The time has not yet come. God will keep His covenant with them. Partially rejected now but not wholly, temporarily in disfavor but not finally, a most glorious future is in store for them.

The Apostle Paul fully discusses these issues in the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. As natural branches they have been broken off, but God is able to graft them in again. God will keep His covenant with them when the Deliverer shall come out of Zion and turn away ungodliness from Jacob.

When considering God's program let us not make the grave error of judging it by a glance at some one section of it. Especially should we keep ever in mind the consummation of the program. This is particularly true of the Jewish part of the program.

Chapter VII

THE CHURCH-PROGRAM

Great confusion has resulted from confounding the Church with Israel. The two are distinct in the Bible and also in the world-program. Israel is God's earthly people and His program for that nation is wholly earthly. Not so the Church. Her program is quite different. Temporarily in the world she has a Divine mission to the world; but she is not of it. Both her origin and her destiny are heavenly.

1. *As Revealed in the Gospels*

When Christ mentioned the Church it was still future. Matt. 16:18. It was something He was going to build. He was the Rock upon which the Church was to rest. He also was to be the Chief Corner Stone. This building is in process of erection at the present time, growing into a holy temple in the Lord for a habitation of God in the Spirit. Eph. 2:21, 22. Each believer becomes a living stone, built into the spiritual house. I Pet. 2:5. This building-process will continue until the spirit-

ual temple of God is completed, when the Church is to be caught up into glory.

ISRAEL TEMPORARILY SUPERSEDED

That the Church was still future in the days of Jesus is revealed in the prophetic warning He gave to the unfaithful Jewish nation: "Therefore I say unto you, The Kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given unto a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." Matt. 21:23. In Rom. 10:19 Paul shows the application of these words of Christ concerning the Church when he quoted the prophecy in Deut. 32:21: "I will provoke you to jealousy with that which is no nation. With a nation void of understanding will I anger you." Concerning this aspect of the Church Peter also wrote: "But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, an holy nation . . . who in time past were no people, but now are the people of God." I Pet. 2:9-10.

Thus we see that Christ forewarned the Jews that spiritual authority would be temporarily taken away from the Chosen Nation and given to another body which He was thereafter to create. This new body was the Church. Because the Jews rejected His rulership over them He temporarily rejected them and took away their spiritual leadership.

INDWELT BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

Our Lord also revealed an entirely new thing in His program when He told the disciples that when He returned to the Father He would send the Holy Spirit, who would abide with them and be in them forever. John 14: 16, 17. The Holy Spirit was also called "the Spirit of truth," and was to be their guide. He it was who would convict the world of sin, and righteousness, and judgment, and who also would glorify Jesus Christ. John 16: 8-13. The enduement of the Holy Spirit would also empower the Church for its work of witness bearing. Acts 1: 8.

MISSION OF THE CHURCH

A further unfolding of Christ's program for His Church was concerning its mission. The Church was commissioned by Christ to evangelize the world. The disciples were to go forth and preach the Gospel to every creature. Repentance and remission of sins were to be proclaimed in His name to all nations. For this work they were to be endued with power from on high. Luke 24: 47-49. This enduement of power was the initial step in the program of the Church and was fulfilled upon the Day of Pentecost. Acts 2: 1-4. In larger measure this program became effective during all the days of the

Apostles; but thus far the Church has sadly failed in carrying out her part of the program, for large portions of the world still remain unevangelized.

OPPOSITION AND PERSECUTION

According to the program as revealed in the Gospels the course of the true Church would not always run smoothly. Ultimate triumph was promised (Matt. 16:18) but opposition and persecution would be encountered. Christ forewarned His followers that for His sake they would be brought before governors and kings and be scourged. They might expect bitterness and betrayal from members of their own household. Indeed they would be hated of all men. Matt. 10:17-22. "If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you." John 15:20. But, "be not afraid of them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul." Matt. 16:28.

The history of the Church, especially during the first three hundred years, fully revealed this persecuting phase of the program, which never really has ceased. Neither should we expect it: "If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." John 15:19. The heart of the world is unchanged. Despite its ardent protestations the world has no real love for Christ or for His followers.

They who think otherwise and preach merely a social regeneration of society apart from the cross of Christ, do not know the unavoidableness of persecution from a world that is more devoted to Satan than to Christ. Hostility is by necessity in the Divine program of the Church down to the very end.

APOSTASY

Again it must be noted that although the Church of Jesus Christ is to be perfected and glorified, "not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing" (Eph. 5:27) yet Christ foresaw imperfection and declension. Many would be led astray by false teachers, and the love of many would wax cold. Matt. 24:11, 12. Can we imagine how saddened Christ must have been as He put those words into the program? It was not His wish that these things should be there, but He could not keep them out. Apostasy was part of the permissive purpose of God. It is His will that man shall try to work out his own salvation. The right way is shown, but man is free to choose his own way. Apostasy showed itself very early. Even one of the twelve became an apostate. In the churches established by the Apostles were many that fell away from the faith. Likewise apostasy is more and more apparent within the Church to-day and will continue to grow to the end of the program.

2. *As Revealed in the Epistles*

In line with Christ's reference to the Church as an institution of the future is the Apostle Paul's reference to the Church as a "mystery," which was not made known to the sons of men in former generations as it was then made known to apostles and prophets through the Spirit. Eph. 3:4, 5. There are veiled references to the Church in the Old Testament but no full revelations. These we find chiefly in the Epistles. In all preceding generations the truths concerning the Church had been kept hidden. Even Christ revealed little concerning the Church. He described at some length the course of Christendom (Matt. 13) but only in the Epistles is clearly depicted the course of the Church.

WORLD-MISSION OF THE CHURCH

All of the Epistles deal with Church-conditions and Church-problems, but our present interest is in their teaching about the Church-program. The first feature is its universal aspect. Following the teaching of Christ, who commanded His disciples to go into all the world, the key-note of the Gospel Age according to the Epistles was, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Rom. 10:13. The Jew came first in this program, but Gentile features finally predominated.

Within the first generation the Gospel was taken throughout the Roman Empire. The missionary spirit of the Early Church never has been equaled. Although to-day the Church has caught a glimpse of the world-mission of the Church, much remains to be done before the Apostolic program for world-evangelization shall be accomplished.

THE INCLUSION OF SUFFERING

The Epistles reflect afflictions and persecutions for the Church. These were particularly evident in the life of Paul and other leaders. Such experiences were to be taken for granted. Peter writes: "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial among you, which cometh upon you to prove you, as though a strange thing happened unto you." I Pet. 4: 14. In the mysterious providence of God suffering was included in the Church-program for purposes beneficial to the Church. We are exhorted not only graciously to submit to them but even to rejoice in them.

GROWING APOSTASY

As in the Gospels, even more conspicuously in the Epistles do we discover the presence and prediction of growing apostasy within the Church. Various Epistles reveal instances of apostasy. For example Paul warned the elders of the highly favored

church in Ephesus that from among their own number false teachers would arise and draw away disciples after them. Acts 20:29, 30. But the place in the program where apostasy would be most apparent would be in the latter days. Dark pictures are drawn of those days. Apostates will "give heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons, through the hypocrisy of men that speak lies." I Tim. 4:1-3. The Day of the Lord cannot precede the coming of this apostasy. II Thess. 2:3. Paralleling the development of the "mystery of the godliness" is the "mystery of iniquity." Alongside the true Church is the harlot Church.

Nevertheless the true Church of Christ is to be triumphant. Her glorification is assured. The world-program for the Church culminates in the Resurrection and the Rapture. Sleeping saints will be raised and together with the living shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. "So shall we be forever with the Lord." I Thess. 4:16-18. "If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him." Thus the message of the Apostles concerning the Church is one of hope and cheer and ultimate victory.

3. *As Revealed in the Apocalypse*

Quite clearly do the messages of Christ to the Seven Churches reveal the history of the professing

Church from the close of the first century down to the very end of the Age. Those heaven-sent messages were not only for that group of local churches, but for all churches and all men everywhere. The seven-fold universal exhortation is: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." The Seven Churches in the province of Asia were representative not only of conditions prevalent in all of the churches when John wrote, but representative of church-conditions down to the end of the Church Age. Moreover the very character of the messages reveal in bold outline the seven successive periods of the history of the Church.

A TWO-FOLD DEVELOPMENT

As revealed in the Gospels and Epistles likewise in these seven letters the same two-fold and parallel development of truth and error, loyalty and falsity, run side by side from the beginning of the program to the very end. It is not Christ's will that apostasy should mingle with apostolicity, but such is the permissive program. Within the Church itself lies either the power to check this apostasy or the willingness to accelerate it. From which we see that the Divine program for the world may be modified by men, though not changed.

Beginning with the portrayal of conditions in the Church at Ephesus, which well represents the

Apostolic Period of church history, we find conditions quite ideal. Only a single censure is merited, and that for no flagrant sin or falsity of doctrine: "But I have this against thee, that thou didst leave thy first love." This falling away was serious but slight in comparison with later lapses as revealed in the period of the Papal Church or of the Reformation Church. Without going into wearisome detail let us consider present-day conditions as they are reflected in the last four messages.

THE HARLOT CHURCH

Taking up the Thyatira or Romish Church we know it to be a church full of good works. This is her boast and also her history. Knowledge of them is emphasized in Christ's message to her. However, after all the good about this church has been said the awful facts are that the Romish Church is an idolatrous, harlot-church, and will pass into the Great Tribulation. Yet within her is a faithful remnant that will have nothing to do with "the deep things of Satan," and which is exhorted to hold fast till He comes. It is significant also that in this church that has so long aspired to dominant political power, the promise to the overcomer is, "to him will I give authority over the nations."

THE LIVING YET DEAD CHURCH

While much was accomplished historically by the Sardis or Reformation Church her outstanding characteristic is, "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and thou art dead." Rev. 3: 1. Dead orthodoxy sapped her spiritual life, and rationalism has now largely supplanted orthodoxy. No works of hers are perfected before God. She began well, but arrested development marks her history. This has been manifested especially in her woeful lack of missionary and evangelistic zeal. To this church Christ will return unexpectedly, as a thief. Nevertheless He says, "But thou hast a few names in Sardis that did not defile their garments; and they shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy."

THE CHURCH WITH THE OPEN DOOR

Prophetically the Philadelphia or Modern Missionary Church Period started with William Carey in 1792. This is the church before which now stands the "open door which none can shut." It is the church with a little power, but which is loyal to Christ's Word and Name. It is the true church of these apostate days, the church which Christ says He loves. But alongside of this church is the synagogue of Satan, full of false believers.

The course of this Missionary Church is not with-

out opposition. There is struggle and conflict. The opponents are themselves apostates, subtle and adroit. Therefore the needed exhortation: "Hold fast that which thou hast, that no one take thy crown." This church is to be most highly honored for it will escape the Great Tribulation: "I also will keep thee from the hour of trial, that hour which is to come upon the whole world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."

THE APOSTATE CHURCH

How is the last period of church history portrayed? Triumphantly, some would have us think; but this has no warrant in the message of Christ. The Laodicean period reveals an apostate church. Rev. 3: 15, 16. Such is the testimony of "the True and Faithful Witness." Christ is not deceived by a fair exterior. Outward prosperity cannot conceal from His eyes the spiritual poverty, wretchedness, blindness and nakedness: "Because thou art lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spew thee out of my mouth." Nauseating to Christ! Yet Christ's love is not exhausted and He makes an ardent appeal to them to obtain from Him the vital things that are lacking. He stands upon the outside of the door and there pleads with any individual upon the inside who may be inclined to repent and open the door to Him, that He may come in to such an one

and sup with him. To all such there is offered a place with Christ upon His throne.

THE CHURCH GLORIFIED

Thus we have unfolded a mingled condition of good and evil within the Church of Christ, which condition is to prevail unto the end. This is a warning against false security, an appeal to examine ourselves. Yet while apostate conditions have been present in the professing Church from the beginning and will continue unto the end, within the professing Church is the true Church which Christ has redeemed with His own precious blood. Oppositions and even persecutions may come, but the end is glorification. The course of the true Church, as portrayed in the Gospel, the Epistles, and the Revelation, ends triumphantly. Her program is a glorious program.

Chapter VIII

THE KINGDOM-PROGRAM

Broadly speaking, the Kingdom of God is universal and all-embracing. It includes heaven and earth; this world and all worlds. His kingdom includes all intelligences. Within God's kingdom are both angels and men, good angels and evil angels, good men and evil men, saints and sinners, some willingly, others unwillingly. But evil spirits and evil men are also in the kingdom of Satan. Thus within the sweep of God's kingdom, considered extensively, are regions of rebellion, spheres of darkness instead of light.

GOD'S GREATEST PROBLEM

The great problem of God is not to keep stars, planets and comets in their orbits, but how to end the reign of rebellion upon the part of men. Since the essence of rebellion against God is sin, His constant problem is how to forever eliminate sin from this world of suffering and misery on account of it.

God's kingdom-program for this earth is seen in the history of His dealing with sin; for the prob-

EVANGELICAL SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

lem of sin is chiefly a problem of government. Sin is a choice of masters. Man early changed the all-wise and loving rulership of God for the supposedly better rulership of Satan. He made a bad bargain, but racially he has not yet fully found it out. This is not God's fault. All through the centuries God's program has been so unfolded and adjusted that it might be attractive to man the rebel.

THE THEOCRATIC KINGDOM

In God's world-program we may discern various phases of the Kingdom. The old Theocratic Kingdom of Israel was the first phase. This chiefly concerned the Chosen Nation, but not exclusively. That nation had a checkered career. Not because the government was not the best, but because the subjects were so bad. Had they measured up to their high calling God would have set them on high above all the nations upon earth. But the time came, after many apostasies and chastisements, that they deliberately rejected God as their King: "They have rejected me, that I should not be king over them." I Sam. 8:7.

THE KINGDOM UNDER THE MONARCHY

Under the monarchy of Israel God sought to rule the nation through kings. Through David and sev-

eral others He had a measure of success. The laws of the Kingdom were His laws. The Chosen Nation was not left to grope its way. Unlike other nations the laws of Israel did not develop out of its history, as some modern subversive teachers of history would have us believe, but were in the main promulgated by God before their national history began. God had a national program for Israel and He revealed beforehand just what His requirements were in order that the nation might live up to the divinely revealed program.

GENTILE DOMINION

Both Theocracy and Monarchy failed. Not that God failed, or His governmental program, for the program is not yet completed. Meanwhile rebellious Israel was punished by foreign captivity, during which time all governmental power was temporarily taken away from Israel and given into the hands of the Gentiles.

The first great Gentile world-power was the Babylonian. This was revealed to its great king, Nebuchadnezzar. It was also revealed to him that three great Gentile world-kingdoms would succeed his kingdom. Dan. 2: 37-44. This was the Divine program and still prevails. The government of the world has been in the hands of the Gentiles ever since the days of Nebuchadnezzar, six hundred years

before Christ. Furthermore the dominion of the Gentiles will not be broken until the God of heaven sets up the world-kingdom that shall abide. Dan. 2:44, 45. Which leads us to remark that the Kingdom of God upon earth, in the form in which God approves, will not be established by the schemes of men. Only the power of God and the wisdom of God are equal to the superhuman task of subduing evil and establishing His rule of righteousness upon the earth.

CHARACTER OF GENTILE DOMINION

The character of Gentile rulership was symbolically forecast by the four wild beasts: the lion, the bear, the leopard, and the strange fourth beast with the iron teeth and the ten horns. Dan. 7:3-8; Rev. 13 and 17. We are not now dealing with the interpretations of these symbolical beasts, but wish only to call attention to their rapacious character. How the nations represented by them have preyed upon one another! Only as held in check by God or by a sense of their own weakness have Gentile governments been kind towards one another. "Wars and rumors of wars" have characterized the history of the nations of the past and this characteristic will persist to the end of Gentile dominion. It is so written into the program. Matt. 24:6, 7.

The deteriorating character of government under

the Gentiles is also revealed in the nature of the materials which composed the great image that Nebuchadnezzar saw, representing the entire period of Gentile supremacy. He was the head of gold, a mighty monarch, possessing many qualities of true greatness, who was brought to see his own dependence on the Most High and to extol the King of Heaven (Dan. 4:34-37) who had made known to Nebuchadnezzar "what shall be in the latter days." Dan. 2:28.

The second world-kingdom was represented by silver, the third by brass, the fourth by iron; the latter form of the fourth by iron and clay. Whatever else we have here it is not progress from lower forms of government to higher, but gradual deterioration. When the weakness and failure of the final stage is reached the God of Heaven will again take personal control of the world-kingdom. Dan. 2:44, 45; Rev. 11:15, 16.

THE KING REJECTED AND THE NATION JUDGED

The most prominent doctrine in both the Old and the New Testament concerns the Kingdom of God upon earth. Here it was that His authority was challenged, and here it is that it must be reëstablished. The world-program really deals with this one thing. So when in the fullness of time Christ was to be born of Mary, the promise made concern-

ing Him was renewed: "The Lord shall give him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." Luke 1:32, 33. This was a promise of the restoration of governmental power to Israel; but the kingdom was not then returned to Israel. Instead they took their King and crucified Him. For this crime judgment fell upon the nation and the subjects of the King were scattered among all the nations of the earth until they should be brought to recognize and claim Him as their Messiah.

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

Meanwhile another phase of the Kingdom of God is in evidence. This is designated as the "Kingdom of Heaven." It was proclaimed by John the Baptist, by Christ, and by the disciples. The phrase occurs only in Matthew's Gospel. It is not identical with the Kingdom of God, but is a phase of that kingdom. It evidently means the rule of the Kingdom of Heaven over the earth, or the application of the principles of heaven to the earth. The Kingdom of Heaven is now in process of being established, but it will not be fully established before the return of the now absent King.

Prior to His crucifixion Christ proclaimed to the leaders of Israel who were rejecting Him: "There-

fore I say unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken away from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruit thereof." Matt. 21:43. Many years before when Israel proved herself unworthy of world-rulership the governmental authority of the earth was transferred to the Gentiles. Likewise when Christ came and the spiritual leaders of the nation proved that they were only blind guides He took away their spiritual leadership and gave it temporarily to the Church. During the present time, the time of the King's absence from the earth, He is ruling through the Church from the right hand of the throne of God in heaven. This part of the Kingdom-program will continue until He removes the Church from the earth and later returns in glory to establish the Kingdom.

The Kingdom of Heaven, however, is not synonymous with the Church, but is a larger term. It is not the mystical Body of Christ, but rather the nominal Church together with its adherents. It is contemporaneous with Christendom, and includes the Church and also that portion of the world that has been to so large an extent influenced by the teachings and the principles of Christ. In that portion of the world where the good seed has been sown, Satan has sown tares. Both the wheat and the tares must be allowed to grow together until the harvest, which is the consummation of this age. Matt. 13:39. Then the Lord of the harvest will send

forth His angels who will take out of His Kingdom all things that cause stumbling and them that do iniquity. Verse 41.

The phrase "kingdom of heaven" is an illusive term. First of all it is the realm of heaven in which is the throne of God. Again, as we have just seen, it refers to the rule of heaven upon earth. The Kingdom of Heaven upon earth is a present reality. Christ is now "the King invisible." But He also is to rule over the earth personally when He returns in power and great glory.

EXTENT OF THE PRESENT KINGDOM

To the extent and in the degree that men during this present age recognize His authority and are obedient to His commandments, Christ is now ruling the earth during the period of His absence. We must concede that His teachings have mightily prevailed in the earth, and that His followers in proportion to their numbers have the greatest influence for righteousness in the world to-day. However, the present rule of Christ over the earth is limited and will continue to be limited up to the very close of the age. Satan opposes the claims of the absent King and obstructs the spread of the Kingdom to the very end. Yet the earthly Kingdom belongs to the heavenly King and the time is coming when Christ's rule will be world-wide and undisputed.

Then the Kingdom will be even more truly than now the "Kingdom of Heaven." That future phase of the Kingdom is known as the Kingdom of the Son of Man.

THE KINGDOM OF SATAN

The world-kingdom of God will not be established by any of the earthly kingdoms, Jew or Gentile, which have been mentioned. His program calls for a future and final form of the Kingdom, and before the visible Kingdom of the Son of Man shall be established in glory a kingdom of entirely different character will rule the world for a brief period.

From the beginning of human history Satan has contended for the rulership of the world. The advancement or the retrogression of mankind is directly traceable to man's allegiance to God or to Satan. Satan's present kingdom is the "kingdom of darkness." So great is Satan's power and so wide his sway that he is called the "prince of the world" and the "god of this age." Once he even had the audacity to tempt our Lord by offering Him all of the kingdoms of the world if He would but fall down and worship him. Most of the world's rulers unknowingly have done what Christ refused to do. The time is coming when for a brief period all the world will worship the Beast, who is Satan incarnate.

A COUNTERFEIT KINGDOM

A counterfeit Kingdom of God is to be established upon the earth. Satan will be the usurper. It is not for us here to enter into the description of that kingdom or to discuss the main evidences of preparation for it, which may be discerned in the world to-day, but only to call attention to the fact itself. It is Satan, the Dragon, who energizes the Beast of Rev. 13 that is to arise out of the sea of nations: "And the Dragon gave him his power, and his throne, and great authority." "And the whole world wondered after the Beast; and they worshiped the Dragon because he gave his authority to the beast." "Woe for the earth and the sea; because the Devil is gone down unto you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time." "And there was given to him authority to continue forty and two months."

Prior to that time the Church will have been removed from the earth, the Man of Sin will have been revealed, lawlessness and violence will have again filled the earth as in the days preceding the Flood.

This usurpation of Satan will be short-lived. The counterfeit kingdom will come to a sudden end. The victorious armies of heaven, headed by Christ Himself, will execute swift judgment upon the Beast and upon all of his followers. The short-

lived Kingdom of Satan will be overthrown and Satan himself securely bound. Rev. 19: 11-21; 20: 1-3.

THE KINGDOM OF THE SON OF MAN

An ideal, perfect Kingdom of God upon earth was clearly revealed in the Old Testament. This very earth which is in rebellion against the government of God will be the sphere of an ideal earthly kingdom ruled over by the Son of Man. His is the right and He will surely reign.

The Second Psalm is a portrayal of the persistent defiant attitude of nations, kings and rulers against Jehovah and against His Anointed. This rebellion will one day end. God will speak to the nations in His wrath and establish His King upon the holy hill of Zion. The nations of the earth have been given to Christ for an inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession. Hence kings and judges are exhorted to "kiss the Son" ere His wrath be kindled.

God promised to establish the throne of David forever. II Sam. 7: 13. This covenant was never lost sight of by psalmist or prophet. The substance of it is, "I have made a covenant with my chosen. I have sworn unto David my servant: Thy seed will I establish forever, and build up thy throne unto all generations." Ps. 89: 3, 4.

When the angel Gabriel appeared unto Mary to announce the coming of this promised Son he said: "The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David." Luke 1:32. At the appointed hour Christ came; but the people of David said, "We will not have this man to reign over us." He returned to heaven, but that event did not end the program of the Kingdom.

"I beheld in the night visions, and behold there came with the clouds of heaven one like unto the Son of Man, and he came even unto the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given unto him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." Dan. 7:13, 14.

The Kingdom here portrayed is earthly. It is to succeed the four great world-empires described in the following verses of the seventh chapter of Daniel. When they should fail the God of heaven would establish upon earth the Kingdom that would abide. This Kingdom is still future, for world-rulership is still in the hands of the Gentiles and will remain there until He comes unto whom has been given the Kingdom, and whose right it is to reign.

Chapter IX

THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE PROGRAM

Most of the events in the world-program are revealed but undated. This does not mean that their time is unknown to God. In His calendar all events are clearly marked. Some dates He has seen fit to reveal to man at various stages in history, while others have been kept secret. For example, it was deemed unwise to reveal the precise day and hour of our Lord's return. We are certain of the event but uncertain as to its time. An event so glorious and weighted with such stupendous and eternal consequences might be a disturbing element in our lives if known to be actually near, while if known to be remote it might tend to lukewarmness and laxity in our living. Hence we have the revealing of the fact but the concealment of the exact day of our Lord's return.

At times, however, God has dealt differently with His earthly people, revealing beforehand dated stretches of history, as well as single events of unusual importance, so that His people might be unmistakably guided in the unfolding of God's purposes for them. These dates might fall within a

single generation or be extended over several generations, as we shall see.

The dating of events beforehand is a simple matter with God. All He has to do is transfer them from His calendar to ours. What is best for us is the consideration that determines what God will reveal.

THE 120 YEARS REVEALED TO NOAH

Few have been the individuals to whom God has dared to speak in terms of days and years. The first of these was Noah. The earliest dated event in terms of years was the Flood. When the moral condition of the world became deplorable and hopeless and God determined to destroy it He revealed to Noah that He would delay its destruction for one hundred and twenty years. Gen. 6:3. This gave Noah ample time for building the Ark and also for calling men to repentance; for Noah was a preacher of righteousness to that corrupt generation.

As the time of the Flood drew near God gave another warning in terms of specified time when He said, "Yet seven days." Gen. 7:4, 10. This was a warning bell for Noah to wind up his work and do the last things before the Divine judgment should fall. Those seven days were also days of grace for those who had not repented under the preaching of Noah.

Nor should we overlook the "forty days and forty nights" during which the rain was to continue. Gen. 7:4. God knew and God gave the dates to Noah. During the unprecedented, and possibly the first prolonged rain storm, Noah was comforted to know the exact date of the ending of that awful judgment.

THE 400 YEARS REVEALED TO ABRAHAM

The second time when God dated events for His people's guidance was near the beginning of the next crisis-period in the world's history. The descendants of Noah had corrupted themselves and become idolaters. The acute stage was reached in the rebellion at the Tower of Babel. God there punished the race by the confusion of tongues and the Dispersion; and later, when the apostasy of the race seemed almost hopeless, God called Abraham out of the midst of surrounding idolatry and revealed to him His far-reaching purposes of blessing which were to include all of the families of the earth.

Abraham enjoys the unique distinction of being called "the friend of God." To him God could freely reveal His secrets: "Shall I hide from Abraham that which I do?" To only a few individuals has God revealed the purposes that deal with the distant future, and to fewer still has He deemed it wise to date future events. Abraham was one of these

latter. The record is as follows: "Know of a surety that thy seed shall be sojourners in a land that is not their's, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; and also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. . . . And in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full." Gen. 15: 13-16.

These four hundred years carried the Divine program beyond the death of Abraham into the fourth generation. His descendants during all this period were to remain sojourners. The land promised to them would be in the possession of others. Meanwhile they themselves would be pilgrims and sojourners, both in Canaan and in Egypt. In this latter country they would suffer affliction. After that they would be delivered, the nation that afflicted them would be judged, and the Israelites would come out of that land laden with riches and return to the Promised Land. With such promises as these God graciously unfolded the history of Abraham's descendants for four hundred years. Abraham was God's friend, to whom He delighted to tell His secrets.

The purpose of the revealing of those four hundred years was not simply because of God's friendship for Abraham. This Divine covenant no doubt often cheered the heart of Abraham during the years

which followed, and it also became a family heritage. While at times the family lived below its privileges, yet the full import of the Abrahamic Covenant never was wholly lost. This is clearly seen in the parting words of Jacob to Joseph: "Behold, I die: but God will be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers." Gen. 48:21. When Joseph came to die he also was mindful of the covenant God had made with Abraham: "I die; but God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware unto Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob." Gen. 50:24. So certain was Joseph that God would carry out His four-hundred-year program that he commanded his brethren, saying, "God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence." The books of Genesis (chapters 21-50), Exodus, Numbers, Leviticus, Deuteronomy, and Joshua tell us how God kept His promise to Abraham concerning the sojournings of the children of Israel for four hundred years, and their final establishment in the Land promised to Abraham and his seed.

THE 70 YEARS OF CAPTIVITY

Still later, after the children of Israel had been long in their land, God revealed to them another dated period of history. This is known as the Seventy Years of Captivity. While the Children of

Israel were still at Mt. Sinai God gave to them a provisional unfolding of their future history in the blessings for obedience and the chastisements for disobedience. Among the latter would be captivity. As a last resort their cities would be wasted, their land desolated and inhabited by their enemies, while they would be scattered among the nations. Lev. 26:31-40.

Despite all that God could do the nation continued to apostatize. Now and then checked for a time the falling away increased in momentum towards the end. Finally God could delay no longer. They must be cured of their idolatry and their national sins. The only way seemed to be to deprive them of all the privileges of God's sanctuary and set them down in the midst of idolatry. The prophet Jeremiah was chosen to bring to them the sad news: "And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years." Jer. 25:11. The last chapter of II Chronicles gives an account of the closing days of the Kingdom of Judah, with a sorrowful explanation of God's yearning over the people and of His deferred judgment.

Jeremiah was God's messenger of sorrow and also of comfort. The Babylonian captivity was for a definite period. If the people believed God they could know just when release would come: "For thus saith Jehovah, After seventy are accomplished

for Babylon, I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place." Jer. 29: 10, 11. Thus during all the years of their captivity they were to know that God's thoughts for them were peace, and not evil, in order to give them hope.

Although the captivity was to terminate at the end of seventy years, yet the ending would be dependent upon prayer: "And ye shall call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. And I will be found of you, saith Jehovah, and I will turn again your captivity." Jer. 29: 12-14.

You recall how prayer also was the means of ending the four-hundred year period revealed to Abraham. When God met Moses upon Horeb and spake to him out of the midst of the Burning Bush, He said that He had "heard the cry" of His people. Likewise when the perverse nation shall experience the great tribulation that is to end their present dispersion among the Gentile nations, from thence they shall seek Jehovah their God, and find Him, and return to Him "in the latter days." Deut. 4: 27-31. At that time God will hear and answer them, and turn their captivity, and gather them again from all the peoples whither He has scattered them. Deut. 30: 1-6.

The prophet Daniel well illustrates the close con-

nection between prayer and the fulfilment of prophecy in connection with the ending of the captivity to Babylon. He informs us that he understood by the books the number of the years whereof the word of Jehovah came to Jeremiah the prophet for the accomplishing of the desolations upon Jerusalem, even seventy years. By which we understand that he found not only this definite prediction, but also the time of its expiration. Then he betook himself to prayer. And such a prayer! Dan. 9: 3-19. Glowing praise, profound humiliation, full confession of sin, and ardent supplication! No wonder that while he was still pleading the angel Gabriel came with a message direct from the throne of God.

THE 490 YEARS REVEALED BY THE ANGEL GABRIEL

A still more important era of dates was the period of four hundred and ninety years revealed through the angel Gabriel: "O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee wisdom and understanding." Daniel's prayer was to be more than answered. These gifts were supernatural gifts, and the "wisdom and understanding" wholly pertained to the future, which only God knows. The Seventy Years of Captivity were about to end. What would follow? God alone could tell. The angel Gabriel was sent to lift the veil from the program for Israel for Seventy Weeks of years. Dan. 9: 24-27. These Weeks were decreed upon

Daniel's people and upon the holy city of Jerusalem. After sixty-two weeks, or four hundred and eighty-three years, the Messiah would be cut off, having nothing, and the city would be destroyed. The last week is separated from the others (v. 27) and many believe the history of that week is continued in the Apocalypse, when God shall again resume His dealings with the Chosen Nation and fulfil His covenants with them.

Just as the revelation of the Seventy-Year Captivity in Babylon was to guide the people as to plans for their return, in like manner the four hundred and ninety years revealed by Gabriel were so broken up into definite parts that those who neared the end of the second period (four hundred and eighty-three years) might know that Messiah was nigh at hand. Probably Simeon was one of these, for he was "looking for the consolation of Israel." "It had been revealed unto him by the Holy Spirit, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ." Luke 2:25-26. When the child Jesus was presented in the Temple the soul of Simeon poured forth the *Nunc Dimittis*. He was joyfully satisfied. The prophetess Anna also, who "worshipped with fastings and supplications night and day," spake of the infant Jesus "to all them that were looking for the redemption of Israel."

Why were these people just at that particular time in such great expectancy? With the nation at large

it was not so. Was it not simply because they, like Daniel, had been studying "the books," particularly the Book of Daniel, and knew that the time was about up for Messiah the Prince to appear? Likewise in these days, when the Lord is to appear the second time, the Church at large is indifferent and unbelieving; but some at least know and understand "the books" and will be expecting the Lord when He comes.

THE FINAL THREE AND ONE-HALF YEARS

The last three and one half years of the four hundred and ninety is an acute period of awful judgments, like the judgment of the Flood or the judgments upon Egypt. It is variously described in the Revelation as "a time, and times, and half a time," "forty and two months," "a thousand two hundred and threescore days." Each phrase amounts to three and one half years. This is the latter part of the period of the brief reign of the Antichrist, when worship shall be given to the Beast and to Satan (Rev. 13:4) and when all who refuse shall be branded for martyrdom. This is the period of that awful tribulation which is to be so fierce that it must needs be shortened. Matt. 24:21, 22. These things are written for the instruction and comfort of "the elect" of those days.

THE 1000 YEARS, OR THE MILLENNIUM

The longest chronological period of the world-program plainly stated in terms of years is found in the Revelation. In chapter twenty, within a space of six verses, the term "a thousand years" occurs six times. There is as good reason for regarding these as literal years as for so regarding the four hundred years unfolded to Abraham, the seventy years revealed to Jeremiah, or the four hundred and ninety years revealed to Daniel. They embrace the true Golden Age of the world's history. Full descriptions of their blessedness are found in the Prophets and in the Psalms. They portray the time when God will reign in righteousness and when unparalleled peace and prosperity will prevail upon the earth. All iniquities, all wars, and every form of graft and greed and oppression shall cease. Man will be tested under the most favorable conditions imaginable. Into the Garden of Eden Satan came and man fell. Ever since then man either has yielded to Satan or struggled for his freedom against him. During the Millennium Satan will be bound and man will be given a final opportunity to see whether under the most favorable environment he will render glad allegiance to God.

THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES

Before the Messiah of Israel was rejected and crucified He foretold the coming destruction of Jerusalem. It would then be "trodden down of the Gentiles." But He placed a limitation upon this subjugation. It was to continue only "until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Luke 21:24. The Times of the Gentiles symbolize Gentile supremacy and rulership. They point back to the beginning of Gentile dominion under Nebuchadnezzar. His kingdom was to be succeeded by three other Gentile world-powers, the last of which was the Roman, the great world-power during the days of Christ upon earth and which continued centuries afterwards. Indeed it has had no single successor. Thus different forms of Gentile dominion have continued in the world until the present day. Only recently, by reason of the British mandate over Palestine, has there been any prospect of that land returning to the control of the Jews.

LENGTH OF THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES

Many earnest students of prophecy believe that the duration of the Times of the Gentiles may be definitely known. This opinion is based upon what is known as the "year-day" theory.

If, then, Gentile dominion is to last for two thou-

sand five hundred and twenty years, the date of their ending may be determined if we know the time of their beginning. They must have begun when Gentile dominion was given into the hands of King Nebuchadnezzar, or about 604 B. C. This date, however, was only the beginning of the complete subjugation of Israel, for in 588 Zedekiah rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar and this resulted in the destruction of the city of Jerusalem and the Temple. Since the beginning of Gentile supremacy was thus marked by a series of important events, we are warranted to conclude the same for the ending of that supremacy. Adding the 2520 years to each of the above dates, for example, we have two terminals for the end of the "times of the Gentiles": B. C. 604 + 2520 = A. D. 1917, the year when the great World War ended; and B. C. 588 + 2520 = A. D. 1933, the year for end of the Times of the Gentiles. These two dates give us a period of sixteen years for the period known as "the time of the end."

So many remarkable events have occurred in seeming conformity with this mode of interpretation that it would be unwise totally to ignore it.

In the book of Daniel, fourth chapter, the story is told of how King Nebuchadnezzar was humiliated by being degraded to the level of the beasts of the field for a period of "seven times." This period of punishment evidently was for a period of seven years. The question is raised, "May not the phrase

'seven times,' repeated four times in this chapter, be symbolic of the times of the Gentiles?" Some support to an affirmative answer seems to be found in Leviticus 26, where God four times repeats that the punishment of His people will be "seven times more" for their sins. Multiplying 360 days (one prophetic year) by 7 we have 2520 days (years) as the period of Gentile dominion and Israel's subjugation.

Another method of thus reckoning the "times of the Gentiles" is based upon the periods of time recorded in the Revelation. We know that "a time, times, and half a time" (Rev. 12:14) equals the 1260 days of Rev. 11:3 and 12:6, and also equals the forty-two months of Rev. 13:5. Hence it is suggested that these are all cipher expressions to designate the same numerical value; and just as 3½ is half of seven, a "times, times and half a time" is the half of "seven times," therefore "seven times" must equal 2 × 1,260 or 2,520 days, which, according to the "year-day" theory, means 2,520 years.

It is held that Israel's punishments always are measured on the scale of "a day for a year," as was the case when the people rebelled in the wilderness. Numbers 14:34. This principle is further emphasized in the experience of the prophet Ezekiel, who was commanded to lie on each side so many days in order to bear the iniquity of Israel and of Judah, "each day for a year." Ezek. 4:4-6.

Whether or not the above method of reckoning be correct, or be objected to, it is significant that the year 1917 seems to have marked the beginning of Israel's restoration to the land so long ago given to her. Opinions may differ as to the exact date, or dates, when the "times of the Gentiles" began, and there are other theories for calculating their length; for example, the use of the lunar, prophetic or solar year. Thus it behooves us not to be dogmatic or over-confident in this matter. For ourselves we are of the opinion that the "year-day" theory lacks Scriptural authority in estimating "the times of the Gentiles." Moreover the language of prophecy demands a more literal and a future fulfilment of the times, the days, and the months of Rev. 12 and 13. But it may be that in much of prophetic chronology there is a double fulfilment. In any case the times of the Gentiles are nearing their end, and we shall be wise to watch the "signs of the times," believing that in the Divine program all events are dated, though not all are clearly revealed to us.

Chapter X

SEEMING IMPROBABILITIES OF THE PROGRAM

A program so vast and varied, involving such insuperable obstacles, encountering so great opposition, might well stagger the faith of men. Because of the complications and seeming impossibilities of the Divine program in individual experience men frequently have been mystified. Notwithstanding the revelation of God's program for the world many have been pessimistic when they have beheld the disheartening conditions prevailing in our own day. The outlook upon the future often is clothed with somber hues. Hope becomes obscured. Therefore it may be helpful to examine some of the seeming improbabilities of the world-program.

A glance at some of these apparent improbabilities will convince us of two striking facts: First, that the program is not of man, for no man would dare to have risked the forecast of history so filled with things seemingly impossible; and the second fact is that since so many of the improbabilities have actually come to pass we can have faith to believe that things equally improbable will be fulfilled in their own good time.

THE SERVITUDE OF THE HAMITES[1]

Take, for example, the outline of racial history handed down through Noah. Noah had prophesied that the descendants of Ham should become a race of servants. Gen. 9:25-27. This prophetic forecast of history Moses faithfully recorded although in his day such a program seemed wholly improbable. Appearances to Moses were entirely the opposite. All of the empires of earliest antiquity were Hamitic; for example, the great empire of Nimrod, that of the Hittites, the seven nations of Canaan, and the mighty kingdom of Egypt. The ascendancy of the posterity of the youngest son of Noah was everywhere in evidence. They dominated both Asia and Africa. Abraham and Moses knew of no different history in their times and it continued for centuries after them.

Since God seemed in no haste to carry out the Noahic program it became more and more improbable. But one after another the powerful Hamitic nations fell into the lowest depths of idolatry and sensuality and perished through their own corruptions. We behold the remnants of their greatness in the pyramids of Egypt, in the massive masonry buried in the mounds of the valleys of the Tigris

[1] For some of the leading suggestions in this chapter the writer is indebted to a volume entitled *The Divine Programme of the World's History*, by H. Grattan Guinness, which is heartily recommended.

and the Euphrates, and in the vain-glorious inscriptions carved upon tablets and temples. The record of their idolatries, immoralities, and corruptions proves that the descendants of Ham were unfit for world-rulership. The scepter was taken away from them. They continue to exist but only as degraded and enslaved peoples. Surely in respect to the Hamites improbability has become history. The mightiest races of men became the weakest and most servile.

WORLD-BLESSING THROUGH ABRAHAM

Passing by that portion of the program which depicted the present enlargement and ascendancy of the Japhetic nations (Gen. 9:27), we turn to the staggering improbability of the promised world-blessings made to Abraham and his descendants. Gen. 12:2-3; 15:5; 17:1-6. Abraham was a Shemite. He belonged to that third of the race which was the least conspicuous. How improbable that from an aged and childless couple should come a multitude of nations, and that from a single family should come Divine blessing to all the families and nations upon the earth! We usually think of the descendants of Abraham as possessing and exercising spiritual blessing and authority. We point in confirmation to Jew, Christian and Mohammedan. But we miss the seeming greater improbability that the

promise made to Abraham also included political or governmental authority. Just as the admitted spiritual supremacy of the seed of Abraham has been established, so also the political supremacy will have its fulfilment in God's appointed time.

UNIVERSAL SOVEREIGNTY OF THE HOUSE OF DAVID

This brings us to the improbable sovereignty promised to the House of David. God covenanted with David to establish his throne for ever. It should be "as the sun" before Him. His kingdom would be without end. A literal begotten son of David was to be the everlasting ruler. II Sam. 7:12-16; Ps. 89:3, 4, 34-37; Ps. 132:1-18. But how could eternal sovereignty be promised to any son of David? How could an individual rule perpetually? Could anything be more improbable?

Of this Son of David it also was prophesied: "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth . . . yea, all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him." Ps. 72:8-10. When we consider the separation of Israel from other nations, and their feebleness in David's time in comparison with the great nations to the North and to the South of him, how impossible for David to have conceived of universal rulership in connection with his

kingdom! It surely was not a human conception but a Divine revelation. The improbability of such a kingdom is further increased by the fact that it was to be neither local, nor Jewish, nor temporary, but universal and unending, totally different from every other kingdom upon earth.

It may be objected that no such king or kingdom has yet appeared upon the stage of history. This is true in part. The King, however, in due time was born, according to the prophecy and the identification of the angel Gabriel. Luke 1 : 32, 33. And if the first part of his prophecy was duly fulfilled, why not the latter part in due time?

We must remember that the present rejection of the Jewish nation, during the absence of the Heir to the throne of David, is an important part of the Divine program, written into it centuries ago: "For the children of Israel shall abide many days without king, and without prince, and without sacrifice, and without pillar, and without ephod or teraphim; afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek Jehovah their God, and David their King, and shall come with fear unto Jehovah and to his goodness in the latter days." Hos. 3 : 4, 5. "In the fulness of time" the King was born. Since this improbability was overcome why should it be considered impossible that "in the latter days" the remainder of the Davidic program should be carried out?

We might make mention of other improbabilities in connection with the Son of David; for example, that He should be Divine as well as human; David's Son, yet David's Lord; that prior to His exaltation as king over the house of Jacob He must both suffer death and be raised from the dead; that in the interval prior to His earthly Kingdom He should sit at the right hand of God in heaven and rule from there. What marvelous improbabilities! Yet all of these have come to pass. Then why not the return from heaven in power and great glory? Why shall He not yet sit upon the throne of David, an earthly throne, and rule as King of Kings and Lord of Lords? Rev. 19:16.

IMPROBABILITIES ABOUT JERUSALEM

After the apostles had accepted Christ as their Messiah how improbable to them must have seemed His words about the destruction of their temple and city and the present prolonged period of the trampling down of Jerusalem by the Gentiles! But since all of these events have come to pass, why can we not believe also that "the times of the Gentiles" are to end (Luke 21:24), and that Israel shall again come into political prominence, at which time Jerusalem shall become the joy of the whole earth?

IMPROBABILITY OF THE JEWISH DISPERSION

Christ foretold that the Jews were to fall by the edge of the sword and be led away captive into all the nations. The number of captives deported and later slain or enslaved was also very great. City and temple were destroyed and Jerusalem never since has been in possession of the Jews. To this day it remains "trodden down of the Gentiles" and the Jews are dispersed literally among all the nations of the earth. The Jew is omnipresent. But to the Jews this seemed utterly improbable. How could they, the Chosen Nation, be so dealt with? To the disciples the massive stones of the Temple were symbols of permanency.

IMPROBABLE PRESERVATION

Improbable as seemed the forthcoming destruction of Jerusalem and the world-wide dispersion of the Jewish nation, these events were not more improbable than the miraculous preservation of the Jews during their prolonged period of scatterment and suffering among the nations. Pillaged and plundered, mulcted and murdered, good citizens of all nations yet despised by all, they have been marvelously preserved unto the present hour. The only explanation is that this portion of their history

is simply a part of the Divine program for them. At the very beginning of its institution as a nation Israel was forewarned that in case they turned back from following God He would chastise them with this very judgment. Deut. 28:64. Their plagues were to be wonderful and of long continuance. Deut. 28:59.

Still more improbable it may seem to some that Israel is to have a future national existence. Yet this is as definitely foretold as the fact of their present dispersion. While scattered among all nations where Jehovah their God has driven them, they are yet to call to mind His words and return to Him. At that time Jehovah will turn their captivity and regather them, even though they be outcasts in the uttermost parts of heaven, and establish them again in their own land. Deut. 30:1-5. How improbable indeed! But not more so than their present preservation.

Thus amid scenes of Jewish peace and prosperity Christ foretold coming disaster and doom as He looked into the hidden scenes of the future and unfolded to the disciples the outlines of the program of Jewish history during the times of His absence. Jesus even wept over Jerusalem as His eyes beheld what was coming. But He also foresaw an end of their sorrows and the final triumph of the Chosen Nation.

IMPROBABLE SUCCESS OF THE GOSPEL

Christ said to His disciples that He sent them forth as sheep among wolves. They were few in number and poor and ignorant, yet Christ commanded them to go with the Gospel unto the uttermost parts of the earth. He told them that the field in which they were to sow the good seed was the world. Without prestige or wealth or experience or force they were to go forth to establish the Church of Christ and proclaim the coming of the Kingdom. How improbable such a program! They were to suffer the bitterest persecution; they were to proclaim a Saviour who had been crucified; yet they were promised success simply through the foolishness of preaching and the unseen power of the Holy Spirit. Possessing no power of their own they were to receive power from on high. Thus in weakness but in faith the disciples were to be instruments in carrying out a seemingly impossible program.

Contrary to human thought or plan the Divine program has measurably succeeded. The Roman empire was conquered by the Gospel within the first three centuries and to-day the entire earth is mapped out and the heralds of the Cross are pushing into every unevangelized corner of the earth. False teaching and apostasy have retarded the spread of

the Gospel, yet it has been triumphant and is still "the power of God unto salvation" to every one that believeth. Human weakness is God's opportunity. What is impossible to men is victory to God.

Chapter XI

CHIEF METHOD AND IMPORTANT PRINCIPLES OF THE PROGRAM

Any well-thought-out program that is designed to accomplish a definite object, such as God's program for man, must include certain methods and principles of operation. What is the procedure? What are the underlying principles which govern the carrying out of the program as a whole? What is the Divine method? How is God working?

THE METHOD OF PROCESS AND CRISIS

In putting through His world-program God adopted the method of alternating process and crisis. God foresaw that the attainment of the ultimate goal for man would require long stretches of time for growth and also short acute crises, followed by a repetition of the method under new conditions and by the introduction of new principles.

We may best understand this recurrent method of the program by a study of its working during the present epochal period. We call this present period the Christian or Church Age, in contrast with the Mosaic Age. It is the Age of Grace rather

than the Age of Law. Our Lord's parable of *the Wheat and the Tares* clearly reveals to us the Divine method of operation. First the seed sowing, which characterizes the beginning of the age, next the longer period that is required for growth, then the short time of the harvest. Such in brief is the method of carrying out the program in each of its great sections; and thus the great epochs of history as designed by God help to carry forward His purposes to their final consummation.

Holding our attention still to the method of the program as revealed for our own age we discover two different sowers, two different seeds, and two different harvests. Matt. 13: 24-30, 37-43. At the commencement of the age the Son of Man sowed the good seed, but Satan sowed tares: "The good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil one." Out of these two sowings of two totally different seeds will come a harvest to the glory of God and a harvest for the furnace of fire.

Such is the history not only of our own age, but of each of the great dispensations of history. Take the first, or Edenic Age. The Garden contained God's man and woman. The environment was perfect, a paradise. Into it came Satan and sin. Judgment swiftly followed.

More clearly we see the method in operation during the second, or Antediluvian Age, since that

age was sufficiently prolonged for fuller examination. It began with a vivid knowledge of the awfulness of sin and also with God's provision for it by sacrifice; but sin soon entered. Cain was rebuked for his lack of faith because he did not bring the required sacrificial offering. The rebuke did not cure, but led only to the further sin of murder. Gen. 4:4-8 (R. V.). Thus did Cain show himself to be a child of Satan, who was a "murderer from the beginning." John 8:44.

Seth was born to take the place of righteous Abel. Then the two seeds were allowed ample time for development. The evil progeny of Cain finally predominated and it became necessary for God to end that age with the Flood and start a new age. Such in the large is God's method of carrying out this program. It is one of repeated alternation of process and crisis, of seed-time, growth, and harvest. Thus man is being tested, sifted and developed by the very method by which God is carrying out His program.

DIVINE PRINCIPLES OF PROCEDURE

Underlying the method of alternating process and crisis are certain principles of Divine action which are applicable to each of the great epochs into which the world-program is divided. These are simple but effective. The first principle is that God starts

each period aright and with sufficient direct revelation for man's guidance during that period. The record is sometimes very incomplete, but we may be assured that the revelation was sufficient. We have only to remind ourselves of the Divine revelations given to Adam, to Noah, to Abraham and to Moses at the commencement of the great ages, and particularly of the fuller revelation through Christ and the New Testament writers at the beginning of the Church Age. Sometimes, moreover, while an age was in process of developing, during seasons of apostasy God raised up prophets through whom He could speak a living message to His people by way of appeal to the program as already revealed, or even to add to that revelation new features by way either of warning or encouragement.

The second principle of Divine procedure is the non-intervention of God while a distinct section of His program is in process of unfolding. Having started the program aright God holds off His hands in order to give man full swing. Man is thus tested both with a view to his ability or his faithlessness. In either case the world-program as such moves forward. God does not intervene except when necessary to preserve His own people or to prevent His program from miscarrying. An instance of this latter would be the destruction of the hosts of Sennacherib when they besieged Jerusalem. At a later time, however, God permitted Jerusalem to be de-

stroyed in order that He might temporarily punish His people for their failure to adhere to the program.

The third principle is that in the time of the harvest God directly intervenes to reward His own for their faithful service and to punish the wicked for their ungodliness. The good seed is saved to sow the new age, while the ungodly are destroyed from the earth. This was the principle at work when God spared Noah and his family while He overwhelmed the remainder of mankind; also when He preserved the nation of Israel while He destroyed the Egyptians. At the close of the present age the same principle will be in full force, when God will take the Church unto Himself, preserve the faithful remnant of Israel, and bring dire judgments upon the world of the ungodly.

Having knowledge of God's alternating method of process and crisis in carrying out the sectional parts of His world-program, and knowing also some of the recurring principles which guide Him in His dealings with men, we have a clearer understanding of the times in which we live. May this knowledge give us the calm and the courage to faithfully do our part. The harvest of the present age may be nearer than we have been accustomed to think.

Chapter XII

AGENTS AND AGENCIES IN THE PROGRAM

God is continuously active in the affairs of men. He not only made His program for the world, and though at times seemingly thwarted He is actively engaged in carrying it out. Employing His own processes He will bring to its timely consummation the program planned in eternity.

God not only has comprehensive plans but also efficient agents and agencies. He makes use of both men and angels who are in harmony with Him and His plans. All of the hidden forces of the universe are ready to do His bidding. Should appointed agents fail and plans seem to miscarry in their ordinary operation then God Himself directly intervenes in supernatural ways. Whatever the contingency the program moves steadily forward.

CHOSEN INDIVIDUALS

Beginning with Noah we have an illustrious instance of how God furthers His program in an emergency by making use of a qualified individual. We say "qualified," for God knows His man and un-

erringly selects the one who is fitted for the exceptional service to which God calls him. Such was Noah, the only man who walked with God. Gen. 6:9. He knew God and God knew him. God trusted Noah and revealed to him the next step in the unfolding and accomplishment of His racial program. Because of the utter corruption of men's hearts and because of the lawlessness and violence which filled the earth God determined to speed its doom. The Flood came and hastened the natural catastrophe which would have come if such deplorable conditions had been permitted to continue.

God not only swept the hopelessly wicked from the earth, but He also provided safety for His own in the midst of that overwhelming disaster. He did this not only for the sake of Noah and his family, but also because this preservation was necessary for the furtherance of His program. The race must be started anew. Righteous Noah and his family, possessing knowledge of the woeful results of sin, were the chosen seed of the new dispensation. Noah was essential to the Divine program.

Likewise when mankind again revolted from God at the Tower of Babel and the race turned away to idolatry, God "gave them up" (Rom. 1:21-25) and fixed upon the man whom God could call His friend. He did this in order to save both His program and the race; for in the choice of Abraham and his family God did not utterly discard the remainder of the

race, but planned through the seed of Abraham eventually to redeem the race.

Again God wonderfully furthered His program through His servant Moses. He was another of the giants of history. Through him God wrought wonders in Egypt and marvelously delivered the Chosen Nation through which He purposed to bring blessing to all the other nations of the earth. Out of this nation also God in due time raised up King David, a man after His own heart, who firmly established the nation as an object-lesson of God's ideal to the surrounding nations. So long as the Chosen Nation maintained its part of the covenant relations to God, He wonderfully prospered and magnified it. But sin entered and God was dethroned.

Then God raised up a special class of men called prophets. And what men they were! Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and men of like faith and fiber. Through them God spoke living messages to His sinning people, seeking to restrain and reform the nation that was so vital to His program.

Special mention also ought to be made of Joseph, who by mysterious providences was sent beforehand into Egypt and exalted to the premiership in order, as he said, to preserve much people alive (Gen. 50:20), in particular the Chosen Family, which was to develop mightily while in Egypt. Surely, too, we shall not forget another instance of Divine

deliverance of the Nation in a most critical hour, after the decree had gone forth and the day set for the extermination of the people of God. This time God chose a woman. Like Joseph she too was taken from obscurity and exalted to a position of superlative importance. God's hand was in it all. And when she realized that possibly she "had come to the kingdom for such a time as this," Queen Esther was willing to take her life in her hand, enter into the presence of the king unbidden, and to courageously plead for the life of her people.

We might make mention of Daniel also and the prominent part he was called upon to take in the royal court of Nebuchadnezzer and his successors during the time of the captivity.

Finally came John the Baptist and the Apostles. Thus we might continue to enumerate individuals raised up in times of special crisis who were trusted agents of God to play important parts in carrying out His program. In modern times mention might be made of Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Knox, John Wesley, and Dwight L. Moody. Who can doubt how important the human individual is as the chosen agent for the furtherance of the Divine program?

Special attention should be called to the unconscious early training of all these individuals for the great work God was preparing them to do when the crisis should arise which He foresaw. What unto-

ward and adverse elements often entered into these lives! How little they suspected how great the work for which God was preparing them! God is dependent upon human individuals, none of them perfect instruments, for the success of His world-program. Hence the care He takes and the sharp instruments He sometimes must use in order to shape and mold His agents for the tasks He is equipping them to perform. We recall the "iron furnace" of Egypt which God used and out of which He graciously brought His people, fitted for unparalleled service.

ANGELS AS MINISTERING SPIRITS

God is not wholly dependent upon human agents. They have accomplished much, but also have failed in much. Not so His angels. In times past there seems to have been a revolt in heaven among the angels, for which punishment still awaits (Jude 6), but the Psalmist truly says that they are mighty in strength, that they hearken unto the voice of Jehovah and fulfil His word. Ps. 103:20. In the extreme crisis in Christ's life He had the power to summon to His aid twelve legions of angels. He had but to say the word and they would have swept to His side and annihilated His enemies. They are obedient to His commands.

Angels have special missions as well as men.

They are said to be "ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them who shall inherit salvation." Heb. 1:14. "The angel of Jehovah encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them." Ps. 34:7. When Jacob blessed Joseph and his sons he gratefully acknowledged his indebtedness to God who had fed him all of his life, and also to the angel who had redeemed him from all evil. Gen. 48:16. Daniel also testified to King Darius: "My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lion's mouth, and they have not hurt me." This, too, was the experience of Daniel's three friends when they were cast into the fiery furnace. Dan. 6:28. Recall also how two angels laid hold upon Lot and his family and hastened them out of doomed Sodom. Gen. 19:15, 16. Peter and John knew what it was to have an angel of the Lord open their prison doors and set them free. Acts 5:19. Most of our deliverances, however, are more like that of Peter when again in prison; and when the angel knocked off his chains and opened the prison doors, Peter was unaware that it was an angel until all was accomplished. Acts 12:9, 11.

Angels have also had a part in revealing the Divine program as well as in executing it. Daniel was given power to interpret dreams and prophecies to kings, but was unable to interpret his own apocalyptic visions. Angels know more of God's program for men than men themselves know. We see

this strikingly manifest in Gabriel's interpretation of Daniel's famous vision of the Seventy Weeks which were so vitally connected with the future history of his people. All was perfectly plain to Gabriel. Dan. 9:24-27. At a later time he was sent to Zacharias and to Mary to announce the birth of John and of Jesus, and also to outline the all-important work they were to accomplish in the program.

ANGELS AS AGENTS OF WRATH

Angels are "ministering spirits," but not always. The men of Sodom who would do violence to Lot and his guests were suddenly smitten with blindness by the two angels. Gen. 19:11. When David was punished for his sin of numbering the people an angel had charge of the pestilence that slew seventy thousand men in three days. Only the restraining mercy of Jehovah prevented the angel from destroying Jerusalem. II Sam. 24:16. Was it this same angel that smote the army of Assyrians, slaying one hundred and eighty-five thousand in a single night? II Kings 19:35.

In the period of judgment with which the Church Age ends angels are to take a most active part. They are the reapers of the world's harvest. They will garner the wheat, but they also will first gather the tares into bundles and burn them: "The Son of Man shall send forth his angels, and they shall

gather out of his kingdom all things that cause stumbling and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be weeping and the gnashing of teeth." Matt. 13:41. Portraying this same consummation of the age the Apostle Paul declares that at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven He will be attended by the angels of His power in flaming fire who shall render vengeance to them that know not God and to them who obey not His gospel. II Thess. 1:7, 8. Especially prominent in the Apocalypse are the angels as executioners of God's wrath. There they are the chief agents who execute the will of God in that period of awful doom for the earth. Recall the angel who is to send forth his sharp sickle to reap that portion of the earth that is destined for the great winepress of the wrath of God. Rev. 14:17-20. In the Apocalypse angels are everywhere active, whether in heaven or upon earth, until all of the enemies of Christ are overthrown and His kingdom established; whether it be to cast the Devil and his angels out of the heavenly places (12:7-9), or whether it be the announcing and inflicting of plagues upon men.

NATIONS AS DIVINE AGENTS

National sins are visited upon nations as such, and God often employs nations as instruments of His

wrath. Take, for example, the nation of Israel. In Genesis the fifteenth chapter occurs a mysterious reference to the Amorites: "For the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full" (v. 16). The interpretation is given four hundred years later in Leviticus the eighteenth chapter, which describes a hopelessly immoral condition. The children of Israel were commanded not to defile themselves with the gross sins of the inhabitants of Canaan, whose incurable sins caused their doom. They were to be cast out of the land because of their iniquity. Their hopeless condition brought upon them the judgment of God in the form of the nation of Israel, which became the executioner of God's wrath. Israel was to show no mercy and to utterly destroy those seven nations which were greater and mightier than they. Deut. 7: 1, 2. Should Israel fail to drive out these nations then they in turn would be used of God later to afflict Israel. They would be as pricks in their eyes and as thorns in their sides. Num. 33: 55, 56.

Just as God used Israel to punish the inhabitants of Canaan for their idolatry and corruption, so in later times He employed the neighboring nations to chastise Israel. The history of the times of the Judges is a record of the alternate blessing and cursing of the Chosen Nation. So long as the people obeyed God they prospered; but whenever they apostatized and turned away to idolatry God used

the surrounding nations to chastise and enslave them.

Various chastisements were inflicted upon Israel during the period of the Monarchy, such as drought, pestilence, mildew, locusts, failure of crops, and physical ailments. Deut. 28:15-24. These were remedial, but served only to check the growing apostasy. The last resort was subjugation to their enemies, which ended finally in the uprooting of Israel and transplanting her to foreign lands; first the Northern Kingdom and later the Southern Kingdom.

There is a striking passage in the tenth chapter of Isaiah: "Ho Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, the staff in whose hand is mine indignation! I will send him against a profane nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire in the streets." Isa. 10:5, 6.

The King of Assyria had no knowledge that he was an instrument of God. His ruling purpose was simply one of boastful conquest and self-glorification. Isaiah 10:7-11, 13, 14. Therefore God in turn would punish him: "Wherefore it shall come to pass, that, when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon Mount Zion and upon Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the proud heart of the King of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks."

Verse 12. In due time God accomplished this judgment upon Assyria by the Babylonians. The use of nations as the agents of God's wrath is one of the commonest facts of history.

ANIMATE NATURE AS AN AGENCY

God uses not only men and angels, but also all of the forces of nature, both animate and inanimate. When we think of animate nature as an agency of God we have chiefly in mind judgments in the form of lice, flies, frogs, locusts, the cankerworm, and the mildew. In our own days we must also add the plagues caused by microbe or germ diseases, with which the medical profession often confesses its inability to cope. It is estimated that more lives were lost by the "flu" than upon the battlefields of the recent great war. Man is quite helpless before the onslaught of infinitesimal germ diseases.

INANIMATE AGENCIES

Even the inanimate forces of nature would be employed either for blessing or cursing upon the nation of Israel. Deut. 28. If they continued loyal to Him then Jehovah would "open unto them the good treasure of the heavens, to give the rain of thy land in its season, and to bless all the work of thy hand." V. 12. But in case of disobedience

and apostasy, "And the heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron." "Jehovah will make the rain of thy land powder and dust; from heaven it shall come down upon thee, until thou be destroyed."

While still in Egypt, during those three days of inky darkness which was felt over all the land, the children of Israel had light in all their dwellings. Ex. 10: 21-23. In their great battle at Gibeon against ten allied Kings "Jehovah cast down great stones from heaven," and more were killed by these hailstones than were slain by the sword. Joshua 10: 11.

"And I saw when he opened the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the whole moon became as blood; and the stars of the heaven fell unto the earth, as a fig tree casteth her unripe figs when she is shaken of a great wind. And the heaven was removed as a scroll when it is rolled up; and every mountain and every island were moved out of their places." Rev. 6: 12-14.

The Book of Revelation has many instances of nature's forces being employed by God in judgment. The seventh in each of the Seal, the Trumpet, and the Vial judgments are quite similar. Each makes mention of voices in heaven which are followed by lightnings and thunders and a great earthquake, by means of which God's wrath is to be accomplished

upon the earth. Rev. 8:5; 11:15; 16:17, 18. These exceptional powers of nature, however, are seldom employed except in the great crises periods of history.

Thus we see that the resources of God are unlimited. Men and angels and all terrestrial and celestial forces are subservient to God in the carrying out of His world-program. Satan and his angels, evil men, however gifted or however strongly organized, are unable to frustrate the plans of God. They are moving forward to certain victory.

Chapter XIII

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL IN THE PROGRAM

Certain apparent contradictions in God's program often perplex souls that are sincere. Not all of the mysteries of life can be fully and satisfactorily solved, for we see only the arcs and not the completed circle of the Divine program.

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

How can the Divine program be a good program when the world is so filled with evil? How can God be good and so often allow evil to be victorious? If God is good why does He not put down evil at once? Is evil necessary to the Divine program? If Christ is going to bind Satan sometime, why does He not do it now?

Such are some of the oft-recurring questions of thoughtful people. The ease with which men sin is appalling. Sin is subtly contagious. Strong currents of greed and lawlessness and crime are causing the serious-minded to wonder towards what possible vortex we are being more and more swiftly borne along. In the presence of organized

evil we feel quite helpless. So must it have seemed to Noah when "every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil continually," and when lawlessness and violence filled the earth. Gen. 6:5, 11, 12. Those days of Noah will be repeated.

God is not the author of evil, but since it found its way into the world He permits it. And since He permits its continuance it must play an important part in the world-program.

EVIL AFFORDS OPPORTUNITY FOR VICTORY

The goal towards which God is working is ideal men and women living in an ideal world. Adam as created was not God's ideal man, for he was an untested man. Testing was necessary to develop his moral fiber. Adam failed under the testing. God's ideal man is Jesus Christ, for He was victorious under every form of testing. God permits evil, but man need not succumb to it. Its purpose is to give man the repeated opportunity to conquer the enemy who once defeated him.

It was not necessary to sin in order to develop the highest type of character. While God's ideal is righteousness, not innocence, a personal experience of sin is not necessary to the attainment of the Divine goal. All that is necessary to develop moral fiber and beauty and grandeur of character is the constant choice of right in preference to evil.

While temptation is necessary for the forming of character the yielding to it is not a part of the Divine program. Righteousness may be maintained in the presence of temptation, but not apart from God. Faith in God is the supreme lesson that His program reveals in all the course of human history.

Evil is here, but so is God. Temptation comes, but with it the way of escape. Satan seeks our downfall, but Christ is Satan's master. We never are tempted above what we are able to bear. Weak in ourselves God offers His ever-present help. We have only to lean upon His all-sufficiency.

History is filled with the ruins of individuals and communities and civilizations that have thought to live apart from God. New generations seem never to be able to learn from former. God's Word, too, is full of danger signals to guard us against the mud-holes, the sharp turns, and the swift trains of sin. These warnings make the wise alert, but fools pass on and are punished.

WHY THE LONG CONFLICT?

God is training men and women to play some big part in the future. He wants men and women of stalwart moral character upon whom He can depend. The present is a hard and long schooling. In the conflict with evil, millenniums are none too long to produce that type of character in man which

by the grace of God will endure the testings of eternity. Many are the graving tools of pain and mistake and misfortune that are necessary to produce the highest type of man, one who will respond instantly and wholly to the love of God and continuously choose His will as the best.

We are not to charge God with the evil that is in the world. Evil was introduced into human experience and history by the will of man. He deliberately chose it. God did not purpose it. God has only provided for it. Evil may result from our own misdeeds, through inherited tendencies or through the sin or neglect of others. Shall we charge God with these? Verily they are not part of His original program. He foresaw but did not cause them. He permits them, however, for some great ultimate good. He could terminate evil now, but it would be unwise to do so before the final stage of His program for man is completed.

EVIL OVERRULED

An old, old story may help us to understand that although evil may befall us God can overrule it for our good and the good of others. The story is that of Joseph. Joseph knew what it was to be hated by his own brothers, to be betrayed, enslaved, slandered, and imprisoned. The sharp prongs of evil drove themselves deeply and repeatedly into his very

EVANGELICAL SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

soul. All without a murmur from him and without a stain upon his character. He had faith in God's overruling program, and was amply rewarded. Later, also, he was able to instruct his conscience-stricken brothers who came supplicating Joseph's leniency and forgiveness. In the greatness of his soul Joseph replied: "Am I in the place of God? And as for you ye meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive." Gen. 50: 15-21. Thus does God overrule the evil that creeps into the program.

Happy indeed the soul that believes in God's all-embracing purposes which can turn even evil into good. He is not the author of evil, but He can use it to further His program. Not that sin is necessary to that program, but that the program of God will go forward in spite of all of the opposing evil forces in the world to the contrary.

GOD NOT HELPLESS

Men may openly defy God's will. Currents of human passion may threaten shipwreck of His plans. God is not helpless even amid the seeming wreckage. Always He is master. "Ye meant evil against me; but God meant it unto good." Repeatedly Joseph's life seemed doomed to failure; but every adverse circumstance, like great billows

of the storm-tossed sea, served only to carry him higher. This doubtless did not always seem so at the time, but Joseph continued to trust God, and God used the hate, the false accusation, the prison. Likewise God used the arrest, the shipwrecks, and the imprisonments of Paul both to enrich him and to further the Gospel. Every life wholly committed to God is borne safely along upon the strong current of God's all-embracing purposes towards His appointed harbor. Every storm and disaster He can turn into victory and blessing.

Chapter XIV

FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY IN RELATION TO THE PROGRAM

How can God be supreme and man be free? How can God be sovereign while man has freedom of choice? How can God carry out His program for man if man determines to carry out his own program?

These seem like contradictory facts. In themselves they are. But if our wills are in accord with God's will, all is well. Harmony prevails. Things are accomplished because of good team work. But when we determine to go our own way instead of God's way, then trouble comes. We pull apart. The delicately adjusted machinery of life gets out of order. Perhaps some of the gears or shafts or springs break.

A SEEMING PARADOX

That God is a sovereign God, "who doeth according to His will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth," cannot be disproved. Equally true is it that we all are conscious of exercising free choice in every great venture or in the

smallest details of life. Man is self-determining. If he were otherwise God could not and would not hold him accountable for his acts. Such are the facts. Belief in God's sovereignty tends to make us lean upon God and trust ourselves to Him, while consciousness of our own freedom of choice tends to heighten our responsibility for our actions.

LIMITATION OF FREEDOM

God is sovereign, yet man is free. "Contradictory," you say. Only seemingly so. God in His sovereignty made man a free moral agent. To this extent God voluntarily limited His sovereignty, but did not decrease or forfeit it. Man is free to act only within the prescribed limits of Divine sovereignty. God still occupies the throne. Man is free to act, yet God carries out His own program. Man is free to choose, but the results of his choosing may be a benefit or a bane to him. If he chooses to make God's will his will, man links himself with all that is good; but if he chooses a way contrary to God's way, he brings upon himself only evil continually.

THE CASE OF PHARAOH

It is difficult to harmonize God's sovereignty and man's free agency in the abstract; but in concrete instances both truths are manifest in their workings.

Take, for example, the historic instance of God's hardening of Pharaoh's heart. The program of God for the furthering of His purposes included the going down into Egypt of the Chosen Family, there to develop into a great nation. Gen. 46: 3, 4. The Divine program also called for the nation to leave Egypt and return to the Chosen Land. Gen. 15: 13-16. When the time arrived for God to deliver His people from their Egyptian oppressors He appeared to Moses in the desert at Mt. Horeb and commissioned him to go to Pharaoh and get permission to depart with the children of Israel. Ex. 3: 10, 12, 18. His purpose was more fully stated later. Ex. 6: 5-8. But Moses was forewarned that Pharaoh would refuse the request. Ex. 3: 19. God said that He would harden Pharaoh's heart. This hardening was not a special judgment, but a natural spiritual process. God did not harden Pharaoh's heart so that he could not let His people go, but his heart was hardened because he would not let them go. God's will was to deliver His people from Egypt, but in accomplishing His purpose He had regard to Pharaoh's free choice in the matter. As we read the record each crisis reveals Pharaoh making his own deliberate decisions. He was at perfect liberty to let the people go or not just as he chose. At first he was utterly defiant: "Who is Jehovah that I should hearken unto his voice to let Israel go?" Ex. 5: 2. Likewise in

each of the following instances when demand was made by Moses Pharaoh is seen to be free to choose. God did not override his will. He never does that. Pharaoh finally gave his consent, not because he wished to do so indeed, but because he saw it was to his best interest to do so.

God did not harden Pharaoh's heart in any autocratic, arbitrary manner, but through the acts of Pharaoh himself. Take these expressions: "Pharaoh's heart is stubborn, he refuseth to let the people go;" "he hardened his heart;" "Pharaoh hardened his heart this time also;" "he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart, he and his people." Thus Pharaoh acting voluntarily was responsible for the hardening of his own heart. Take his own confession: "I have sinned this time." Ex. 9:27. He was fully conscious of acting from no compulsion.

TWO SPIRITUAL LAWS

Two spiritual laws are seen in operation here. One is revealed in Ex. 43:21: "See that thou do before Pharaoh all the wonders which I have put in thy hand: but I will harden his heart." The law might be stated thus: The rejection of God's revelation unfailingly produces hardening of the heart. It was the sure operation of this law that caused the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. God manifested

himself in those wonders to such an extent that Pharaoh was convinced that He indeed was Jehovah, the God of the whole earth; but in the light of that revelation Pharaoh remained stubborn and obdurate. Thus he hardened his heart yet more and more with each new manifestation of God's power. This is a spiritual law and unfailingly operative. By it God hardened Pharaoh's heart through the very choices which Pharaoh voluntarily and repeatedly made.

The other law is that repeated refusals to hearken to God's voice accelerate and fix the hardening process. Forewarnings came and judgments fell with increasing severity upon the Egyptians. Pharaoh at times softened and partially yielded. He went so far as to confess his sin, but afterwards changed his mind and became more and more rebellious, until at the close of the ninth plague he reached the climax of his defiance: "Get thee from me, take heed to thyself, see my face no more: for in the day thou seest my face thou shalt die." The hardening process had reached its climax. Up to this point there had been hope for Pharaoh. Beyond this point no room was left for repentance. The hardening process had proceeded so far that by his own act he brought upon himself and his people the final fearsome judgment of the slaying of the firstborn of all the land of Egypt.

THE GUILT OF JUDAS

Again we may see the working of God's sovereignty and man's free agency in the events of the Crucifixion: "The things which God foreshadowed by the mouth of the prophets, that the Christ should suffer, he thus fulfilled." Acts 3: 18. To this end it was necessary that Jesus should be betrayed. Yet He said, "Woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed. Good were it for that man that he had not been born." The prophecy of the Crucifixion was plainly written into the program. It was a necessity. Yet the betrayer of Jesus plotted and acted from no sense of necessity but from free choice. Judas in remorse finally confessed: "I have betrayed innocent blood." He was conscious of having acted freely in the matter, and knew that he must bear the responsibility.

THE CRIME OF THE CRUCIFIXION

The Apostles were not mystified by these things, and why should we be? Peter boldly assailed the leaders of Israel with such words as these: "Him, being delivered up by the determinate council and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay." Acts 2: 23. The early Church clearly saw, according to Psalm 2: 25, 26, that both Herod and Pontius Pilate, the Gentiles

and Israelites, purposed to do to Jesus whatsoever God foreordained to come to pass. Acts 4: 24-29. The Crucifixion was in God's program, but the men who took part in the infamous deed did so by their own voluntary choice as free moral agents. Man is free, and hence accountable; but his freedom is within the realm of God's sovereignty. Because of that all-embracing sovereignty God is able to carry forward His world-program either with the co-operation of men or by overruling their opposition, all the while holding men accountable to Him because of their own freedom of choice.

Chapter XV

THE PROBLEM OF SUFFERING

Another of the conflicting problems of the Divine program is that of suffering. How can God love us and yet endure to see us suffer? How is it possible for love to inflict suffering? The mystery of Christ's sufferings is baffling. How can God suffer? Why are the awful sufferings of individuals, masses, and peoples permitted to continue? The problem of suffering is as old and older than the Book of Job. What is its place in the program?

REAL OR IMAGINARY?

According to one modern heresy the way to dispose of suffering is to deny its reality. It teaches that there is no pain, no suffering. These exist only in thought and imagination. Think good and peaceful thoughts and you will not experience bodily suffering, will not be sick. But no such easy process of denial is effective in its working. Thus far suffering and death are the common lot of men. Christian Science may self-hypnotize men and seem to produce the desired results temporarily in some cases, and even to effect healings, but the very heal-

ers themselves sicken and die just like other men of clay.

NO IMMUNITY

Another and more devout class would have us believe that for the Christian there need be no sickness if only we have been rightly instructed and have faith of the right kind. Then we can have immunity from all bodily suffering. No doubt God can and often does heal the sick directly in response to the prayer of faith, but this does not prove that suffering has no part in the Divine program; and the people who hold this doctrine, although they may have experienced Divine healing, also sicken and die.

FACING THE FACTS

So we had better face the facts. Suffering is here, actual, immeasurable, awful! Think of the tragedy and the frightfulness of the world-war. Think of the various hungry and suffering masses in India and elsewhere, of the oppressed, and of the outcast. Yes; suffering is here. Always has been since sin entered, and will continue unto the end. In a world of sin suffering is a necessity. But what about it? Is God still a God of love?

One answer to that last question is given in the inspired Word: "Whom the Lord loveth he chas-

teneth." We better believe it and so live as not to merit the chastening rod. When rightly received Divine affliction is helpful and remedial. The filial heart always responds to loving chastisements; while rebellion, as in Pharaoh, leads only to final doom. Far wiser the faith of patient Job: "Though he slay me, yet will I wait for him." Job 13:15 (R. V., mar.). But we are not to think of sufferings as always due to the chastisements of God. More often they are due to our own follies or to circumstances beyond our control.

CLASSIFICATION OF SUFFERINGS

It may help us to better understand the place and the purpose of sufferings in the Divine program if we pause to make a classification of them:

(1) *Sequential.* Sufferings which result from our own acts of ignorance or willfulness. Sin always entails suffering, which may be immediate or remote, temporary or lasting. When God said to Adam, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," He was merely enforcing a spiritual law, namely, "The soul that sinneth, it shall surely die." Sin by its very nature is disintegrating. It corrodes, rots, destroys. This is true of its effect upon the mind, the soul, and the body. True both of the individual and of society. Suffering is the natural and inevitable sequence of sin.

(2) *Punitive.* God does not always wait for sin to produce its natural harvest. Sometimes He inflicts suffering directly. An acute crisis may compel Him thus to act. The destructive judgment of the Flood is an outstanding instance, or the plagues upon Egypt, or the extermination of the corrupt nations which dwelt in Canaan. God may also so deal with an individual, as when Herod being praised as God did not restrain the people. Acts 12: 21-23.

(3) *Remedial.* Sufferings sometimes are inflicted upon God's people in the form of Divine chastisements. How frequently was this the case of the Israelites. Whenever they turned back from following God He faithfully carried out His part of the program as revealed in the curses pronounced upon Israel for disobedience. Deut. 28: 15-68. If when we sin God did not recall us through special chastisements, He would fail in His part of the program.

(4) *Permissive.* The case of Job is the conspicuous Old Testament instance. Job did not merit Divine chastisement, yet God permitted Satan to afflict him within certain limits. Whatever may be the mystery involved here we have the facts. We also know that Job's sufferings were turned into greater blessings for him. In the New Testament we have Paul, with his thorn in the flesh, "a messenger of Satan to buffet him." But the grace of

God exceeded the pain, and no doubt one reason for the permissive sufferings of the saints is in order to make manifest the superabounding grace of God. When we think of these permissive sufferings we should include those caused by hereditary weaknesses and tendencies, environments, accidents, wars, and epidemic catastrophes. God could prevent these things, but for some wise end He often permits them.

(5) *Substitutionary.* This form of suffering is the most mysterious of all. Why should one suffer for another? Yet this is the law of love. We see it illustrated among men and in the animal world, as when a parent gives its life in defense of its offspring. It was elemental in the sacrificial offerings. The animal was substituted for the person. The supreme expression of substitutionary suffering in the Old Testament is in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. It is in the form of prophecy: "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. . . . Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." In New Testament times Caiaphas, the high priest, gave expression to this truth when he gave official sanction to the death of Christ, saying that it was expedient that one man should die for the people, lest the whole nation perish. John 11:50. Our Lord looked upon His death as "a ransom for many,"

saying that His blood was "poured out for many unto remission of sins." Matt. 20:28; 26:28. To this end He became a curse for us, and was made to be sin for us. Gal. 3:13; I Cor. 5:21.

MYSTERY AND NECESSITY OF THE CROSS

The greatest mystery of suffering is that of Christ. Sometimes we are baffled by reason of human suffering in its varied and awful forms, but usually we can discover the cause or find some good reason for it. But why should the God-man voluntarily undergo the agonies of the Cross? Yet rightly understood this was the most vital and essential thing in God's program for man the sinner.

Bearing in mind that the Divine program has for its goal the perfection of man—spirit, soul, and body, and also the perfect adjustment of men to God and to one another, we are ready to believe that so marvelous an event as the Crucifixion must have been an indispensable factor in the world-program. Some aspects of it must always remain a mystery, but we are assured that Calvary was no unforeseen incident of the program, but its main feature. Jesus was not the victim of cruel circumstances or a mere martyr to high ideals, but was simply carrying out His part in the program that was conceived and planned before the foundation of the world. God's program is far-reaching, and it

"became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the author of their salvation perfect through sufferings." Heb. 2:10.

The mystery of the Kenosis and of the humiliation of the Son of God still remains; yet through suffering and death He "tasted death for every man" and is now "crowned with glory and honor." Heb. 2:9. This was the all-important part of the program which only Christ could perform. Through humiliation He attained glorification, and through His suffering and death men may become sharers of His glory. Had Christ not died for us we could not have had life. Now we may become partakers of His unending fullness of life.

THE OFFENSE OF THE CROSS

Some modern minds stumble over the offense of the Cross. This is nothing new. It was so with the Greek intellectuals in Paul's day. To them the Cross was foolishness. Its shame still endures. Its mystery still baffles the unbelieving. But there was no other way. The goal of the program could never have been reached if Calvary had been side-tracked. This suffering unto death of the Son of God was the only way to show men the awfulness of their sins and to reveal the agonizing love of God in their behalf. Except for the Cross of Christ we never

could have conceived of the wonder and the persistence of God's love for sinning men. Christ nailed to the Cross is the only power upon earth that stirs the depths of men's hearts and draws men back to God. This is the Divine psychology of the Cross of Christ. But this was not all. The Cross of Christ was a substitutionary sacrifice for men: "He bare our sins in his own body on the tree."

In closing this consideration of the problem of suffering we revert again to human suffering. It may possess purifying power, but no saving power. There is no solution for suffering except as we turn to Christ. Suffering may help to soften us and to make us sympathetic, but the secret of being reconciled to it is being reconciled to God through the Cross of Jesus Christ. Only through preaching the Cross can God's program for men be carried forward to completion. No weak substitutes for God's way of saving men will accomplish the desired end.

Chapter XVI

THE PRIMACY OF PRAYER IN THE PROGRAM

Prayer is another paradox in the program. If God has definitely planned and purposed, and if the success of the program is assured, why pray? Since we are living in a world of law and order, what is the value of prayer anyway? Does prayer possess any power to change God's plans? If not, then why pray? What a mystery is prayer!

PRAYER VITAL TO THE PROGRAM

Prayer is not a contradiction to the program of God, but is a vital part of that program. Believing prayer furthers the program, while faithlessness in prayer retards it. Such was the teaching of Christ when He said to His disciples, "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth laborers into his harvest." In other words prayer is an essential part of the program. Prayer is not only not immaterial and needless, but is vital to the furtherance of the program. God sends forth laborers in answer to prayer; and He sends forth the right kind of laborers.

THE MAIN CHANNEL OF OPERATION

Prayer is the main channel through which the program operates. It is operative because God has made it a part of His program. God works as men pray. His ceaseless working depends upon our ceaseless praying. When our Lord said that "men ought always to pray, and not to faint," and when Paul enjoined us "to pray without ceasing," they spoke with a full knowledge of the place of prayer as the channel through which God carries out His purposes.

PRAYER GOD'S METHOD

Prayer is a Divine method. God employs other agents and agencies, but in His dealings with men God's usual method is to employ men who have been specially chosen and fitted for His work. This does not mean that these chosen ones are always perfect instruments; but whatever the imperfections of the one who seeks to serve God, prayer plays an important part in his equipment for service. Prayer brings him into contact with God, who is the only source of power for Divine service. Prayer-contact with God also purifies our hearts and rightly motivates them. Prayer makes us receptive and fits us to receive what God wants to pass on to the needy souls of others. All men and women who have

been greatly used in the carrying out of the world-program have been accustomed to spend much time in prayer. Purified and energized by prayer they have gone forth to do mighty things for God.

PRAYER LIBERATES SUPERNATURAL FORCES

Thus by the prayers of men God's resources become operative in the realm of human history. God is infinite and His purposes for men are all-powerful; yet God works through men only to the degree that their coöperation permits. Prayer is coöperation with God in the accomplishing of His purposes. Thus prayer enlarges God's sphere of action. Through prayer Divine forces come into play which otherwise would remain dormant. Prayer sets free the play of supernatural forces. Thus prayer is "found to be not so much a means of bringing God to see as we do, and to act as we desire, but rather the giving of opportunity to the Lord to carry out His great desires and purposes."

PRAYER AND THE WILL OF GOD

Through prayer we come to know the mind of God for us individually. In general the will of God for us is revealed in His Word; but through personal communion with God we may know what God particularly wants us to do, what part each disciple

is to perform in the program. The program of God often has been endangered by would-be helpers who dash hither and thither in ceaseless activity, without first having sought and discovered through prayer just what the Maker of the world-program would have them to do for its furtherance.

IS PRAYER SCIENTIFIC?

In this present scientific age, when the laws of nature, or laws of the physical realm, are so generally known, prayer presents a special difficulty to some minds. If physical laws are invariable what good does it do to pray contrary to them? How harmonize prayer and science? Even if it were true that some prayers seem contrary to the nature of things, this would be no argument against the efficacy of prayer. Is God supreme over nature or is He subject to its laws? The laws of nature are simply God's ways of working and God at any time may introduce new laws or work according to laws not yet discovered by man.

Moreover there are laws governing the spiritual realm as well as the realm of nature. There are fixed laws of prayer, just as much as there are fixed laws of gravitation, light, or electricity. In a sense all laws are spiritual, whatever the media through which they manifest themselves. May not prayer be as much a cosmic force as gravitation? It certainly

often has been proved to have most intimate relation to the forces of nature. The control of Elijah over rain, or his calling down fire from heaven, show both the intimacy with and the supremacy of prayer over nature. Prayer is far more effective than mind or matter or all of the forces of nature.

PRIMACY OF PRAYER

The difficulty is not with prayer, but with our understanding of its scope and character. If all things are possible with God, then all things are possible to the soul that binds itself to God by the invisible bands of prayer. Therefore prayer is one of the mightiest forces in the hand of God for the accomplishment of His program for men. It kindles desire, consumes the dross, adds fuel to zeal, thrusts us forth to do the hard things and accomplish the impossible.

The Church of to-day largely has lost the sense of the need of intercessory prayer. Its reflex value is appreciated by many individuals, but the vital place of prayer in the purposes and processes of God is little understood. The prevailing conception of prayer is that it is a valuable supplement to preaching and social service, whereas in the program of God it is primary. Lack of prayer chokes the main channel of Divine operation.

Prayer is work as much as preaching and personal

service and often far more effective. We may not fully understand the Divine philosophy or psychology of prayer, but in ways too mysterious for us to understand it permits God to work within the heart of him who prays and also in hearts and lives thousands of miles distant from him who prays.

Personal service is necessary in the carrying out of God's program; but spiritual forces are far more needful because our chief needs and our most powerful enemies are spiritual needs and spiritual enemies. Our only hope for success and victory is in God. In the Divine program prayer is the appointed means for releasing the powers of God in behalf of the world's needs.

Prayer is the force that blinds us to the barriers of the natural and enables us to lay hold upon the supernatural. Nature limits us upon every hand, holding us to the working of its invariable laws, while prayer frees us from the bonds of the natural and lifts us into the realm of the love and the omnipotence of God. Prayer transcends experience. It is so intended. God means through prayer to bring to pass the impossible. It is vital to His program.

"PRAYING HYDE"

A certain Theological Seminary in this country has graduated hundreds of men for the ministry,

many of whom have been men of exceptional ability, have filled important pulpits, and have accomplished notable service in other fields of labor. John Hyde, a graduate of this institution and a classmate of the writer, probably has excelled them all in what he did for Christ's Church. He did not excel as a student, though probably he was above the average. When he went to India he did not at first give promise of being a remarkable missionary. Indeed he seemed to lack the enthusiasm and zeal a young missionary ought to have. But a mighty change took place in Hyde when he learned that prayer was one of God's indispensable methods of working. He became known as "The Apostle of Prayer." He himself was an answer to prayer, and in answer to his own prayers as a missionary God raised up scores of native workers. Through prayer George Müller built and sustained his great orphanages; but John Hyde was not raised up to do a work of Christian philanthropy. His far greater work was that of soul-saving. With him this became a passion. Foodless days and sleepless nights were spent in prayer. Shaken with sobs, he would plead, "O God, give me souls or I die!" Hundreds, even thousands, of souls were given to him in answer to prayer. At one time he prayed that he might win to Christ at least one soul a day; the next year it was two souls a day; later it was four a day. But whatever the number his hunger for souls was never sat-

isfied. The more he prayed the greater became his passion for souls and greater were the numbers won. If only the Church would grasp the meaning of prayer in God's program and be willing to pay the price of wakeful watchings, of yearning, pleading, and agonizing prayer for the myriads of lost souls as did "Praying Hyde," then the Divine program for the present age would be speedily fulfilled.

Chapter XVII

THE SUPERNATURAL ELEMENT IN THE PROGRAM

Many modern scientists and philosophers would rule out the supernatural from all human history. Because the supernatural is not naturally discerned they would rule it out of consideration. In the words of one of them, "As the belief in miracles and in special answers to prayer and in the interference of the supernatural within the natural has gradually disappeared, almost the only *pragmatic* value of the supernatural left to religion is the belief in a personal future life." This same writer also says, "We cannot shut our eyes to the fact that higher criticism and the Darwinian theory have made tremendous inroads upon the faith of the people so far as this is based upon reasoning, and all indications make it seem likely that changes in popular religious thought which have already taken place are almost insignificant with those we shall see in the next few decades." [1]

The theory of evolution as employed by the Modernists in their interpretation of history reduces the

[1] James Bissill Pratt. Quoted from *The Religion of Religious Psychology* (pages 29, 30), by Charles Calvert Ellis, Ph.D.

latter to mere naturalism. As a philosophic method evolution as applied to history ruthlessly tramples upon facts and reconstructs Bible history to conform to the mold of its own unsubstantiated hypothesis. It is significant, too, that destructive higher criticism is so closely linked with evolution, for in so far as they are employed in the interpretation of history they are one, and their destructive results are the same.

HOPELESSNESS OF EVOLUTION

As a program for the perfection of humanity mere evolution is the most hopeless that can be imagined. Even its most ardent advocates do not claim any immediate alluring prospect, for in view of its slow and disappointing achievements in the past the desired goal cannot be attained for ages and ages to come. The words of Huxley are abundantly confirmative of this truth: "The theory of evolution encourages no millenarian anticipations. The cosmic nature born within us and to a large extent necessary to our existence, is the outcome of millions of years of severe training, and it would be folly to imagine that a few centuries will suffice to subdue its masterfulness to purely ethical ends. Ethical nature may count upon having to reckon with a tenacious and powerful enemy as long as the world lasts."

Thus in view of man's much acclaimed historical and evolutionary development the prospect is dis-

heartening. Left solely to his own innate traits and natural instincts man has not yet demonstrated his ability for self-improvement; for alongside his highest aspirations is a drag that ceaselessly pulls him down. Its ugly name is Sin, a thing that many Modernists would minimize or ignore. Their only remedy for sin is reform through self-effort and improved environment, which ends quite as often in failure as in success. God's remedy for sin is not reform but regeneration; and this is supernatural. And only as God supernaturally intervenes in the affairs of men can men rise by His power to the heights God has planned for them. All of the real and lasting achievements of men in the moral sphere, whether in the limited compass of individual experience or in the greater historical events and onward movements of mankind, have been the result of the direct intervention of God plus the continuous exercise of His mighty uplift. The program of perfection requires both an immanent God whose power is ceaselessly active in the affairs of men, and also a transcendent God who will intervene in human affairs whenever they become hopeless and establish a new and better order of things.

MIRACLES NOT INCREDIBLE

Various materials, such as steel, wood, glass, leather, could not of themselves come together into

the form of an automobile. The automobile is a modern human miracle by which man has directed and forced the laws of nature to do his bidding. The aeroplane and the wireless phonograph are even greater wonders in which man has both manipulated and disturbed the ordinary processes of nature. Is it then incredible that God, who implanted all the forces in nature, and who more thoroughly understands them than men, should be able to manipulate them at will, or even to introduce new forces if necessary? Has God less liberty than man in the execution of His all-embracing purposes? Is it incredible to suppose that the natural processes known to men are not God's sole method of working?

REASONABLENESS OF MIRACLES

Miracles need not be a stumbling-block if rightly understood. They simply reveal in an unusual way the presence of God in nature and in history. They do not contravene the laws of nature, but only temporarily exceed them. A miracle is "not a lawless event," but belongs to the realm of God's operations both in the physical and the spiritual worlds. Miracles are indispensable to God's program. Because of the insufficiency of man it is absolutely necessary that God should sometimes work in wondrous ways. Science has done much in the discovery and manipu-

lation of the laws of nature, or God's known ways of working; but when science would deify nature and bring us into bondage to its laws it is time that a rational belief in miracles should unfetter our minds and give us the daring of faith that lays hold upon the boundless resources of an almighty God. Dwellers in the cities of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum were rebuked and doomed because they did not give due weight to the miracles Christ had performed in them. Matt. 11 : 20-24. Yet it is becoming quite the popular thing in our day for near-scholars and those who ape them to take the same attitude towards the "mighty works" of Christ as did the degenerate scoffers of that age.

THE NECESSITY OF MIRACLES

Not only are miracles reasonable, they are a necessity. They are one of God's ways of working. Even Darwin, in his scheme of evolution, found it necessary to start with a miracle when seeking to explain the origin of life. But if one miracle was necessary, why exclude others? The consistent evolutionist rules out this possibility because his scheme of naturalism is opposed to miracles, although there is no really scientific ground for eliminating them. In fact Darwin's explanation of the cause of the different forms of life demanded from seven to ten

separate miracles.[1] Not only was a miracle needed to create the first form, or forms, of life, but only the fact of additional miracles can adequately account for the varied instincts and sensations of the animal kingdom, and especially for the sentient and spiritual life of man.

Limiting our consideration to the Divine program for man, the necessity for the occasional miraculous intervention of God is abundantly evident. The down-pull of sin has been so preponderant that it has been absolutely necessary for God to supernaturally intervene in human history in order to preserve His moral government, and to prevent His all-wise and loving plans for the race from miscarrying. Particularly we may refer to the manner of Christ's coming into the world, His resurrection, His ascension, and the miraculous events of the Day of Pentecost.

MIRACLE PERIODS

Miracles are not God's ordinary method, but extraordinary. They have occurred in great numbers at only two epochal crises in the past. The first was in connection with the introduction of the Age of Law under Moses, and the second in connection with the introduction of the Age of Grace under Jesus

[1] *Theistic Evolution*, page 19, Fairhurst.

Christ. Each of these extraordinary revelations of God required special and unusual attestations of His power in order to arrest attention and give Divine endorsement to His messengers and their message. Ought we not naturally to expect supernatural revelations to be accompanied by supernatural manifestations of the Divine power and presence? Miracles are a necessary part of the Divine plans to advance God's program. God is always at work in the world, but special crises call for special manifestations of His power.

THE SUPERNATURAL NOT UNCOMMON

The very plan of God to establish His kingdom upon the earth is presumptive evidence in favor of the supernatural. The phrase, "Kingdom of heaven," of itself implies a supernatural order upon earth at the present time. Not an order due to ordinary or natural progression as the result of human endeavor and achievement, but an order established and maintained by the supernatural working of God. Just as the human origin of Christ was supernatural, as miracle was a prominent element in His ministry, as His resurrection and ascension were wholly supernatural, likewise the new life begun in the Christian is supernatural, is evidenced by supernatural works, and finally a supernatural resurrection and translation will mark its consummation.

THE CHURCH AND THE SUPERNATURAL

Thus the Church of Christ is not natural, but supernatural. Its place and work in the program are supernatural. Failure marks its course whenever the Church descends to live upon the plane of the natural. Only when it takes its rightful position and depends upon supernatural powers to work within it and through it has it ever been truly the representative of God or measurably forwarded His program. "To work miracles and to make confident drafts upon the supernatural is our Christian duty and privilege." If the Church ceases to believe in miracles it is a defeated Church. Dependence upon natural resources only, such as money and organization, mean certain failure; while utter dependence upon the unlimited resources of the supernatural means joyous success.

Christ said to His disciples, "But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you"; and again, "Verily, verily I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do." Such language clearly reveals that He certainly had in mind the unusual and the miraculous. While doubtless the "greater works" were to be of a spiritual nature, wrought through the coming and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, yet works of a physical nature were not excluded. Neither have these latter ever wholly

ceased, but they are not so great nor so important as the spiritual miracles, such as the re-creation of the souls of men and the complete transformation of their lives. Yet where necessity has arisen God has ever shown himself ready to give visible attestations to the power of the Gospel. The prevailing mistake has been that our unbelief has restricted the miracle power of God. The powerlessness of the Church to-day is its lost sense of its supernatural character and the failure to use the supernatural powers which God has placed at her disposal. Only by a return to the faith of the Apostolic Church will the Church of to-day exercise the power of the Apostolic Church.

COMING AGE OF THE SUPERNATURAL

But the age of continuous miracle will not prevail upon the earth prior to the complete establishment of the Kingdom. The universal Kingdom of the Son of Man is to follow the present limited sway of the Kingdom of Heaven. The very establishment of that kingdom will be supernatural. Dan. 2:44, 45. Degenerate and apostate world-powers will be suddenly overthrown by Divine judgment upon them. When that part of God's program is completed the earth will be truly Paradise. The omnipotence of God will then be unrestrained. A single authority will then dominate all spheres of

being. Unlike all the preceding attempts at world-empire a new principle will prevail and a new power will operate unceasingly for the welfare of man. Kingship and Kingdom will then no longer be mere figures or predictions, but actuality and fulfilment. An entirely new order of things will supersede the present order.

A perfected order of society will not result from any of the plans, devices, or achievements of men. Mankind does not possess the requisite power that is necessary to re-create the present social, industrial, and political relationships of men. These unholy conditions are merely surface indications of deeper needs, needs that can be met only by the supernatural exhibition of the power of God. That which the earth was meant to be, that divinely glorious and perfected arena for the display of supreme love for God and an equal love of men for men, can and will be produced by God himself. In that age the supernatural will be so common as to be the natural. One will, and that the will of God, shall then hold complete and loving and universal sway. In that coming age of glory will be fully answered the daily prayer of the present citizens of the Kingdom, "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven."

Chapter XVIII

CHRIST'S PART IN THE PROGRAM

Reference already has been made to the ceaseless activity of God in the carrying out of His program. The various methods have been indicated, and the agents and agencies enumerated. In addition to the continuous working of God from behind the scenes, as it were, occasions have arisen and will yet arise which demand His personal and open intervention in order to carry His program to completion.

Moreover, certain phases of Christ's particular part in the program demand special attention lest we forget that He is the most interested Person, that His is by far the most important part, and that the program itself would fail if His work were to be omitted. To leave out Christ from the world-program would be far more serious than to omit Washington or Lincoln from American history.

THE MAKER OF THE AGES

The opening verses of the Epistle to the Hebrews are an inspired résumé of the work of the Son of God. Among other things it declares that the Father through the Son "made the worlds." While

true, as John tells us, that the Son took the leading part in creation, the word here used for "worlds" is a *time* word, meaning "ages." The cosmic ages may be included, but also the various successive ages of God's dealings with man in the gradual unfolding of His program. Christ's disciples made specific use of the term in this sense when they inquired of Him concerning the time of His coming and of "the consummation of the age." Matt. 24:3 (margin).

On account of the comprehensive and extended program of Christ in accomplishing man's complete redemption, which includes the planning and the supervision of the various ages of human history, we should reasonably expect in every time of acute crisis or dire need that Christ would intervene in behalf of His people. This is just what sacred history reveals, and His controlling hand will bring the program to a victorious conclusion.

CHRIST THE GREATEST THEME OF PROPHECY

Beginning with the very first prophecy of God to fallen man He foretold the time when "the seed of the woman" would bruise the Serpent's head. All history is a record of the conflict between good and evil, between Christ and Satan. Satan and his kingdom of darkness could have been overthrown long ago, but in the wisdom of God Satan has been

permitted to continue to tempt, deceive, and seduce men. This sad condition cannot go on forever. When Christ caught a vision of His victorious Cross He said, "Now shall the prince of this world be cast out." John 12:31. Thus by anticipation He foresaw the coming defeat of Satan, whose head He will yet bruise.

Two great lines of prophecy concerning Christ run throughout the Old Testament. One refers to His kingship, the other to His saviourhood. The kingly prophecies predominate, though the others are not a minor feature. In song and in prophecy the portrait of Christ is drawn and the main features of His work are clearly revealed. While many lesser matters fall within the range of predictive prophecy, the overshading Person is the majestic figure of the Coming One who will "turn and overturn" until His own Kingdom of righteousness and peace shall fill the whole earth.

REJECTED AS KING

Twice has Christ been rejected as the King of Israel. You will recall how Jehovah (Christ) [1] delivered Israel out of Egypt and brought the people to Mt. Sinai, and said, "Ye shall be mine own possession. . . . And ye shall be unto me a kingdom." Invisibly, but really, God was to reign over them.

[1] See *His Glory*, by the Author, Chapter II.

Laws were laid down for their guidance and solemnly accepted by the Chosen Nation: "All that Jehovah hath spoken we will do." They were separated unto Him and He was pledged to do for them. When mindful and obedient they were marvelously blessed; but when forgetful and disobedient they were severely chastised. Such was their history during the period of the Judges, those men who were divinely raised up to be the representatives of the unseen King, and such has been their history down to the present moment.

Contact and intimacy with heathen neighbors caused the Israelites again and again to apostatize. Finally they became so emboldened in their departure from God that they came to Samuel, the priest-judge, and demanded a visible king: "Make us a king to judge us like all the nations." Samuel was displeased, but even he seemed not to know the real import of this demand. Then Jehovah said to Samuel: "Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee; for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not be king over them." Even though warned of the character and the meaning of human kingship the people pressed their demand. Although forewarned that in the day of their extremity Jehovah would not answer them, in proud rebellion they replied, "Nay, but we will have a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations." Thus was Jehovah formally

rejected as King of Israel; and although He never gave up the nation He was prevented from doing for them what no human king could do.

THE SECOND REJECTION

The second rejection of Christ as Israel's King occurred when He became the Son of David. As such He was born King of the Jews (Matt. 2:2) in fulfilment of many prophecies. King Herod murderously sought to take his life. His forerunner, John the Baptist, said of Him, "After me cometh a man who is become before me: for he was before me." This One was prophesied to become "Ruler in Israel; whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting." Mic. 5:2. The One who "inhabiteth eternity" was born King of the Jews.

Upon the occasion of the so-called "triumphal entry" of Jesus into Jerusalem He accepted Kingly acclamations and Messianic honors. John 12:13-15. When upon trial before Pilate and asked point-blank, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" He replied, "Thou sayest." Luke 23:3. According to John's account Jesus added, "But now my kingdom is not from hence." This explanation often is overlooked. Concerning His kingship, Christ said, "To this end I have been born, and to this end I have come into the world." That Jesus was crucified instead of crowned in no sense altered His kingship.

Jesus offered Himself to the Jewish nation as its long expected Messiah, but was rejected. John's account is intensely dramatic. Pilate, conscience-stricken, sought in every way to release Jesus, but the Jews created a counter-fear in Pilate's heart when they cried out, "If thou release this man, thou art not Cæsar's friend: every one who maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar." Both Pilate and the Jews understood that Jesus claimed to be King.

With reluctance and in desperation, seeking to shift the blame of crime to the accusers of Jesus, Pilate then said, "Behold, your King!"

But the mad howling increased: "Away with him, away with him, crucify him!"

"Shall I crucify your King?" asks the despicable judge, still seeking to shift the blame of crime. But the chief priests, envious beyond all precautions and impious beyond compute, in mock patriotism exclaimed, "We have no king but Cæsar."

Having previous knowledge of the repeated plottings of the Jewish leaders to kill Him, and also having foreknowledge of what was to befall Him, Jesus already had lamented over the coming fate of Jerusalem. Luke 19: 41-44. Already He had informed His disciples that the Jews would be led away captive into all the nations, and that Jerusalem would be trodden down "until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Luke 21: 20-24.

KINGLY CLAIMS NOT ABANDONED

All the world, though unaware, has vital interests wrapped up in the *end* of the "times of the Gentiles." At that time world-rulership will revert to the nation divinely chosen for that purpose. Jerusalem will then cease to be trodden down by the Gentiles and the kingship of Jesus will be openly manifested; for the Son of Man is yet to be seen "sitting at the right hand of power, and coming on the clouds of heaven." Matt. 26:64.

The angel Gabriel did not deceive Mary when he promised that the Most High would give her Son the throne of His father David, and that He would rule over the house of Jacob. Luke 1:32, 33. Nor was Jesus mistaken when He promised His disciples, "Verily I say unto you, that ye who have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit upon the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Matt. 19:28.

Since these conditions never yet have prevailed they still pertain to the future. Christ is King and He will yet establish His kingdom upon the earth. This is vital to the success of God's world-program. All other governmental schemes have failed. Only the Kingdom of the Son of Man will accomplish for man what God has purposed. This is revealed in song, in prophecy, and in promise. The coming of

the Kingdom is the thing most to be desired, is the theme of our prayers, and the object of our effort. God will establish it in His own time.

THE PROPHET LIKE UNTO MOSES

When the children of Israel arrived upon the east side of the Jordan and Moses was delivering his farewell addresses, he comforted the people with the promise of God that He would raise up a prophet like unto Moses: "I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee; and I will put my words into his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I have commanded him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him." Deut. 18: 18, 19.

God spoke unto Moses and Moses gave His words to the people. Afterwards he wrote them, so that future generations might benefit by them. And God held the people accountable to Him whenever they would not hearken to His words. Even to this very day the nation is under God's displeasure and judgment because they refused to obey God's words.

That was a marvelous revelation which came to the world upon Mt. Sinai, but a still more wondrous one was given to the world when God spoke through His son. Heb. 1: 1. Christ said that His words were the words of Him that sent Him, and that He

did not speak from himself. Among other things He said: "For all things that I heard from my Father I have made known unto you." Again: "For the words which thou gavest me I have given them; and they received them, and know of a truth that I came forth from thee." These words, God's words, spoken by the Prophet like unto Moses, are "words of eternal life" to all who receive them.

God also said that if any man would not hearken to the words of Christ, that he "would require it of him." That is, He would hold him responsible and accountable to Him. This was also Christ's own estimate of His words: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my sayings, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day." John 12:48.

The Prophet like unto Moses was Christ, and one who gave even a fuller and more blessed revelation than came upon Mt. Sinai. Both revelations were God-given. Both revealed much concerning God's program for man. Both pointed the way to blessing, and also warned men of coming judgment should they refuse to hearken to God's words.

A PRIEST AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK

In the Epistle to the Hebrews Christ is called a "high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." This comparison directs our attention first of all to

the eternity of the priesthood of Christ, as suggested by the language, "having neither beginning of days nor end of life." Heb. 7:3. Jesus Christ is our High Priest "forever." This characteristic imparts reassurance when we think of His world-program, for we have learned that His program covers centuries of history, many of which are past; but the program still reaches far into the future. Shall the benefits of the Sacrifice that has been "offered once for all" for the sins of the world be experienced only in the present? What guarantee have we that those benefits will be perpetuated? We have the answer in the fact of the eternity of our High Priest, who "ever liveth to make intercession for us." He is at this moment interceding in behalf of those who are His present representatives and ambassadors in the world for the furtherance of His program. Christ's priestly intercession in heaven will continue until His priestly work for those upon the earth shall have accomplished its full purpose.

THE CONQUEROR OF SIN

The greatest hindrance to the completion of God's program is sin. At the beginning of human history sin imperiled the program and ever has hindered it. The essence of sin is lawlessness. It flaunts its own desire and intent in the face of God and disregards the welfare of others. Human government is the

history of the attempt to control or to suppress sin. All the sorrows and the griefs of mankind are traceable to sin. God must deal firmly, yet lovingly, with this greatest of all problems, because the program calls for its banishment from society and its eradication from the human heart. The very desire to sin must be taken completely away. This is a task too great for man. The wreckage that has strewn all the paths of history is sufficient proof that man is utterly incapable of dealing with sin. This is Christ's chief part in the world-program. Only He can effectually put away sin, and this He has done for those who accept Him by the sacrifice of himself. He also will deal with rebellious sinners, but in a different way.

BOTH PRIEST AND SACRIFICE

Unlike Melchizedek or any Aaronic priest, Christ is both priest and sacrifice. Other priests offered various animal sacrifices, which in themselves possessed no merit. They were merely shadows of good things to come. They could never take away sins, and they must be oft repeated. Not so with the sacrifice offered by our High Priest. His body was a Divinely prepared sacrifice (Heb. 10:5) which Christ obediently offered (vs. 8, 9) and by which we have been sanctified and perfected forever (vs. 10, 14). Thus the program for the elimination

of sin will be completely accomplished for us by Jesus Christ, our Great High Priest, who put away sin by the voluntary sacrifice of himself. Some good people to-day are more supersensitive to the thought of the blood atonement than they are sensitive to the awfulness of sin. With God this is just the reverse.

THE UNIVERSAL HIGH PRIEST

Jesus Christ was not simply a Jewish high priest, or a high priest only for the Jews. Melchizedek was outside of the Jewish race. His priesthood pertained to a people whom Abraham found already in Canaan. Furthermore, he was known as "priest of God Most High," Supreme Ruler of the universe. This phase of the priesthood of Melchizedek is peculiarly appropriate to Christ. His priestly work upon the Cross was the supreme expression and proof of God's love for the entire world. As John said, "He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world."

It is because of the universality of Christ's priesthood that the representatives of the Cross are under present compulsion to make a world-wide proclamation of salvation. Because the needs of all men are the same God has made the same provision for all men. For men of every tribe and nation Christ is God's acceptable High Priest, the only Mediator be-

tween God and men and by whom we must be saved.

After making the acceptable and effectual sacrifice for sin Christ "entered not into a holy place made with hands," but "into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." There He represents us, intercedes for us, and pleads our case, as it were. If our sins are covered by His precious blood, we may rest assured that all is well for us now and for all time to come. This present mediatorship of Christ is frequently forgotten by most Christians, or they may even be entirely ignorant of the fact. But there Christ is, at the right hand of God, our sympathetic High Priest, who knows us, understands our problems, and is ever ready to care for us as we try to carry out our part of the program on the earth.

CHRIST A KING-PRIEST

In connection with the priestly work of Christ in the provision He has made for sin, the writer of Hebrews passes at once to mention two dread and appointed events in the lives of all men, namely, death and judgment. Heb. 9:27. Is it because he wishes us more truly to appreciate and evaluate the death of Christ? Is it to lift a warning voice for those who think of rejecting the atoning work of the world's High Priest? Or is it for the purpose of reminding us (v. 28) that the crucified Christ, who

now appears in the presence of God for us, "shall appear the second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for him"? Because this Second Appearing will, in part, be for the purpose of executing judgment upon the ungodly.

This Return of our High Priest reminds us of another characteristic of Melchizedek. He not only was a priest, but also a king. Gen. 14: 18. Unlike any of the Aaronic priesthood Melchizedek exercised regal power. He was a king-priest. And our Lord is like him. The One Hundred and Tenth Psalm brings out some of the kingly aspects of Christ, the king-priest, such as Melchizedek was:

Jehovah saith unto my lord,
Sit thou at my right hand,
Until I make thine enemies thy footstool.
Jehovah will send forth the rod of thy strength out of Zion:
Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.
Thy people offer themselves willingly
In the day of thy power, in holy array:
Out of the womb of the morning
Thou hast the dew of thy youth.
Jehovah hath sworn, and will not repent:
Thou art a priest for ever
After the order of Melchizedek.
The Lord at thy right hand
Will strike through kings in the day of his wrath.
He will judge among the nations,
He will fill the places with dead bodies;
He will strike through the head in many countries.

This psalm reveals certainly kingly qualities of our King-Priest. First of all He will maintain His sovereignty. He is not at present fully exercising His regal power, but the good time is coming when He will "rule in the midst of his enemies" and "will strike through kings in the day of his wrath." At that time He "will judge among the nations." In this and similar language we learn that the world's King-Priest will exercise supreme and just and personal rulership over all the earth.

THE SON OF DAVID

Melchizedek was king of Salem. In the light of Psalm 76: 2 certain traditional cities of Salem must be abandoned in favor of Jerusalem: "In Salem also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling place in Zion." This language can apply only to the God of Jacob (v. 6). As in Psalm 110, so in this Psalm also we have a picture of judgment; but here it is in order to save all the meek of the earth (v. 8).

Salem literally designates the place of Christ's earthly throne. As legal heir to David's throne Christ is one day to reign over all the earth from Jerusalem. The prophecies are so many and so specific that to deny this fact is to discredit the Bible itself. Having already devoted space to this subject we need not enlarge upon it here. Just the nature of that reign we do not need to know, but let

not any apparent difficulties blind us to the plain teachings of God's Word. Since Christ appeared to His disciples after His resurrection during a space of forty days, it is not incredible that He will be seen upon earth again. Christ is yet to sit upon the throne of His father David. Isa. 9:7. Whatever else this may mean, it means that He is to reign from Jerusalem, for that was the seat of David's kingdom, and it will again be known, as of old, as "The City of the Great King."

VICTORY OVER ALL ENEMIES

Prior to the rebuilding of the tabernacle of David, which is to be the work of Christ when He returns (Acts 15:16), certain acts of judgment must be performed. We dislike to mention them, but they will be essential to the forwarding of the world-program.

When Christ was upon earth He patiently endured all the indignities evil men could heap upon Him. He paid to the full the penalty of man's sin, finally submitting to be "led as a lamb to the slaughter."

The tables are to be turned. Christ's enemies are to be made His footstool. At the present time "angels and authorities and powers" have been made subject unto Him, but the earth is still in rebellion. This is permitted until the Gospel of the Kingdom has been proclaimed in all the world; then the end will come. Matt. 24:14. The King will return.

David did not have an easy time in establishing his kingdom, but the day finally came after much warring and bloodshed when God gave him rest from all his enemies. II Sam. 7:11. As already seen that day is still to come for Christ; not gradually, as in the case of David, but speedily at the end. When God's hour strikes for the establishment of His kingdom He will make short work of it.

When Christ drew nigh to Jerusalem in order to die, the disciples supposed that the kingdom of God was immediately to appear. Luke 19:11. Then Christ told them the parable of the nobleman who took his journey into a far country to receive a kingdom and to return. In this parable the nobleman represents Christ. But there are citizens, His own countrymen, who hate Him, and say, "We will not that this man reign over us." Very well. They have made their choice. What will happen to them when Christ returns as King? This is what He will say: "But these mine enemies, that would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me."

The attitude of Christ's enemies is vividly portrayed in the Second Psalm:

> "The kings of the earth set themselves,
> And the rulers take counsel together,
> Against Jehovah and against his anointed, saying,

Let us break their bands asunder,
And cast away their cords from us."

. . . . .

"Then will he speak unto them in his wrath,
And vex them in his sore displeasure:
Yet have I set my King
Upon my holy hill of Zion."

The Psalm closes with a loving appeal to the kings and judges of the earth:

"Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way,
For his wrath will soon be kindled.
Blessed are all they that take refuge in him."

David was a man of war and did what fighting that was necessary to firmly establish his kingdom. His disturbed reign was followed by the peaceful reign of Solomon. Likewise, after Christ subdues all of His enemies He will rule in peace and equity over all the nations of the earth. That reign is fully described in the Psalms and the Prophets. It is the earthly goal towards which the Divine program is swiftly moving.

We have seen how Christ's part in the program is the all-important part. As Maker of the ages He has planned the world-program, sees the end from the beginning, and is pledged to its victorious consummation.

As the rejected King He is now seated at the right hand of the throne of God awaiting the day when He shall take the reins of government upon the earth, overthrow evil in every form, and establish His universal kingdom of righteousness and peace.

As the central theme of prophecy, and also the One who brings events to pass in their own good time, we have seen how Christ has set His seal upon the prophecies concerning himself by having already fulfilled so many of them in the past and in the present, which are a sure guarantee that "the Scripture cannot be broken." Therefore we have every assurance that the unfulfilled portions of the program concerning Him and His work will certainly come to pass.

As our Great High Priest, who has gone into the heavens for us, we owe everything to Him, because He has made a perfect and acceptable atonement for our sins; because at the present time He makes continual intercession for us; and because He is to come again in glory as our King-Priest and reign over the earth from Jerusalem. Christ is the Son of David, and thus heir to his throne. He also is Son of Abraham, the Promised Seed in whom all the families and nations of the earth are to be blessed.

The completion of Christ's part in the program for man may tarry, but cannot fail. God has the

wisdom, the power, and the agencies to bring it to successful completion. By faithful coöperation man may help forward the Divine program, but the failure of man cannot frustrate it. The program is of God and He will see to its success. God is sensitive to man's loving coöperation and is pledged to amply reward; but He also will require it of man, if any should fail to hearken unto His words.

At the present hour world-conditions are far from being ideal, and also far from God's revealed purposes. Mingled feelings of uncertainty and dread are gripping the souls of many who are serious-minded and who sense the situation. We have a word of cheer for all such. However dark the hour there is no room for pessimism. Become acquainted with God's program, know that all adverse conditions have been foreseen by Him, have been provided for, and that more glorious days are just on ahead. Then gird up the loins of your mind and in unwavering faith give yourself to making Christ known to all men and thus help prepare the way for the coming of the Kingdom. Remember this: Christ is the beginning and the end of the world-program. His own words are, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord God, which is and which was and which is to come, the Almighty."

Chapter XIX

THE PROGRAM AS A VINDICATION OF GOD

In the minds of some readers doubts may still linger as to whether the Divine program as unfolded is the best possible. Why has it not accomplished more? Why so many seeming failures? As to the latter question we may reply that the failures are indeed only "seeming." Out of each apparent failure elements have emerged that have added to the strength of the program and also contributed to its final success. A glance over the great epochs of sacred history will convince one of this. For example, the present Era of Grace far surpasses any that preceded it and has accomplished far more for the present benefit and the future blessing of mankind.

Let it be clearly understood that first of all the world-program itself must be worthy of the goodness and majesty of God. Failure here is irreparable. The program must reflect both God's character and almightiness. The transformation of existing deplorable conditions must be so complete and so ideal that the love, perfection, and power of God

can never again be justly questioned. The completed program must find the earth so metamorphosed that all evil, all sorrow, all death, and all sin must be completely and forever abolished. This goal is far from being reached, but it must be attained before God and His program can be completely vindicated.

CHARACTER OF THE HUMAN AGENTS

If we think that the program ought to have accomplished more than it has, consider that the chief agents selected to carry out His program have been mostly mere men. The program is not at fault, but the agents. Nor was it possible to choose different and more efficient agents. The program is in behalf of men, and in most ways men can be helped only by men. God cannot do everything for man, because his complete recovery from sin and its awful effects must depend to a considerable extent upon man himself. God has made perfect provision for sin, whether individual or collective, national or racial, but the complete victory over it depends in no small measure upon man's response to God and upon the zeal with which man obeys God and coöperates with Him in the carrying out of His program. Hence in no small degree the success of the program for man depends upon man himself. God is doing the best He can with such agents as He has.

JUDGED BY WHAT IT HAS ACCOMPLISHED

There are several methods by which to judge a program before we pronounce it a failure. The first is by what it already has accomplished; and when we consider what the Divine program has accomplished we must take into consideration the problems to be solved and the obstacles to be overcome. Apart from Judaism consider only the great things accomplished by Christianity. In contrast with the almost universal prevalence of immorality, vice, slavery, the degradation of woman, oppression of the poor and the weak, which things characterized the highest civilization in the days when Christ was born, compare the best civilization to-day, which is so largely merely a by-product of Christianity. Our partly Christianized civilization, with its higher ideals by no means realized, is not the best that God can do, but it affords us a glimpse of what He will do when His program is in full and unhindered operation.

The world has not yet been evangelized. God's will in this respect has not been realized. In this matter the followers of Christ have failed. But when we think of the innumerable host of men and women who in past centuries and in the present have been regenerated, saved, purified, and many glorified, shall we not say that the Divine program

is already a vindication of God? All who know what it is to be reconciled to God, who have God's peace in their hearts, and who experience daily victory over the world through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, praise God for His eternal purposes for them in Christ. They have a foretaste of the final victories which the Divine program reveals.

VINDICATION OF THE CONSUMMATION

How unfair and unjust it would be to judge the plans and the ability of an architect by the partially completed structure! Await the finishing touches before pronouncing judgment. Likewise we would be unfair and unjust to God to condemn His plans for the world prior to the last detail of their completion. Wait until the *finale*. God has ever the goal in view, and so ought we. When the program is finished and the last scene of the last act has been staged, then will be sung the grand "Hallelujah Chorus" of all created beings, whether in heaven or on earth.

One of the unusual expressions of Christ was "the consummation of the age." When He commissioned His disciples to evangelize the world He promised them His abiding presence to the very end of the age if only they would go forth in obedience to His command. His program is shaped for the

long results. The end of all things is in all of His plans. Within those far-reaching plans are all the intervening stages. Christ worked and is still working towards that all-important goal which He called "the consummation."

The Apostle Peter referred to this consummation in connection with the return of Christ, "whom the heaven must receive **until the restoration of all things**, whereof God spake by the mouth of his holy prophets that have been from old." Acts 3:21. Thus the consummation of the program for the world has been in view a long time, and God has revealed it to us lest we be discouraged along the way. We are ever to keep our eyes upon the *end* of the age. That marvelous series of events will then completely vindicate both God and His program.

VINDICATION OF THE RESURRECTION

In connection with the coming consummation will be the resurrection of believers. The redemption planned by God includes our bodies. The Divine program would be incomplete without this. Sin wrecked our bodies as well as our souls. They too must be redeemed. In view of this great event Paul tells us that the whole creation groans and travails in pain; for at that time the material creation will share in the glory of the children of God. We also who have the first-fruits of the Spirit eagerly

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anticipate the redemption of our body. Rom. 8:22, 23.

Nor is this all. Those resurrected bodies will not be the same bodies, subject to physical ailments and limitations. They will be spiritual and heavenly and glorious. I Cor. 15:42-44. Not natural, but supernatural. For the body of our humiliation will be conformed to the body of His glory. Phil. 3:21. The human body is the most wonderful instrument in the world, self-regulating, self-repairing, self-propagating, and dominated by a superior soul. To restore the natural body to its original perfection would have been a wonderful thing for God to have planned, but to give us entirely new, spiritual bodies, not subject to weakness or decay, pain or sickness! Will not this be a wonderful vindication of God's program?

How far short all man-made schemes fall in comparison with God's program for man's complete redemption is nowhere so apparent as here. For example, the best that evolution has to offer, apart from God, is the gradual development of the "superman." He may be godlike, but can never attain absolute perfection. The sanctification of the body, as well as of soul and spirit, is wholly dependent upon the resurrection of the body. All theories of triumph through gradual development during countless generations have no certainty of attaining the hoped-for goal, because death intercepts the incompleted proc-

esses. The Divine program will be triumphantly vindicated not only in resurrected and spiritualized bodies, but also in all the victories associated with that supernatural event. Human plans and theories are poor rivals to the all-performing purposes of God.

VINDICATION OF THE RAPTURE

In connection with the resurrection of believers who have died, should be mentioned the glorification and ascension of the living saints. Too little emphasis has been placed upon this. We should proclaim the Rapture. We shall not all die. Death is not a necessity. Enoch and Elijah did not die. An entire generation of believers in Christ has been promised immunity from death. "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" these corruptible bodies of ours, subject to decay and death, will be changed and will put on immortality. At that time, and in that moment, we shall be caught up to meet the descending Lord in the air, henceforth to be ever with Him. I Thess. 4: 16-18. What a triumph for God and for us! Such may have been God's plan at the beginning, and which the entrance of sin into the world interrupted. We do not know; but we do know what God plans to do for His church in the triumph of the Rapture.

VINDICATION OF JUDGMENT

It was revealed to Daniel that while many who slept in the dust of the earth would awake to everlasting life, others would awake to shame and everlasting contempt. In Christ's program of the resurrection these same two parties are kept in view: the one reserved for the resurrection of life, and the other for the resurrection of judgment. John 5:28, 29. God is able to deliver His own, but He also will by no means clear the guilty.

Moreover the living as well as the dead are to be judged. In the world-field the wheat, representing the sons of the kingdom, is to be garnered; but the tares, or the sons of the evil one, are to be gathered and burned with fire. The reapers are the angels. Matt. 13:38-42. Their work will be thorough. But other agencies also will be employed in the coming judgments which are to sweep over the earth. See Revelation, chapters six to nineteen.

Whatever may be the mystery connected with the judgment of the wicked, of this we may be sure: Our God is a loving and just God. "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" So reasoned Abraham as he pleaded for Sodom, and with that thought also he probably was comforted when the city was destroyed. When we clearly see things from God's angle, in the full light of His knowledge and wisdom, we shall see in the awful approaching

judgments of God that are coming the complete vindication of His terrible acts.

VINDICATION OF THE KINGDOM AGE

If God is at all vindicated in His past and present dealings with man, what shall we say of the Kingdom Age? That is to be the age of glory, the Golden Age of the world. None of the past ages have been satisfactory. The program has triumphed but not fully. In the coming age, when Satan shall be bound, when evil shall be suppressed, when government shall be ideal, when the earth itself shall be renovated and renewed, then the vindication of the program of God will be perfect.

The present world-order is full of inequalities and injustices, of greed, and strife, and war. Human government always has been marked by partial or complete failure. Unable properly to govern himself man has equally failed in his government of others. It always has been so. Individual sin makes it impossible to eliminate the sins of society. Not until man is directly under God's government, a willing and loyal subject, can we have ideal conditions in the world. Human governments may be good, but only God's government is perfect. When His Kingdom is eventually established on the earth, then universal righteousness and peace will be established.

VINDICATION BY THE DEFEAT OF SATAN

The promise made to Adam and Eve contained the prophecy that the Seed of the woman would bruise the Serpent's head. And Christ, who was this promised Seed, once declared: "I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from the heaven." Luke 10:18. This was upon the return of the Seventy when they rejoiced that even the demons were subject unto them in Christ's name. They then were assured that He had given them authority over all the power of the Enemy.

The Apostle John assures us that "the Son of God was manifested to destroy the works of the devil." I John 3:8. Since Satan was responsible for the introduction of sin into the world, with all of its attendant personal miseries and its destruction of men and communities and nations, surely that will be a mighty vindication of God's program for man, when the Son of Man shall personally accomplish the doom of Satan.

VINDICATION OF THE NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH

Lest any one should still doubt that the world-program will be a perfect vindication of God we point to the final consummation of all things, when God shall make all things new—a new heaven, a

new earth, and a holy city, the New Jerusalem, which is to be the center of light and worship and blessing for the new earth. In that new earth it is promised that "the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his peoples, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God; and he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning; nor crying, nor pain, any more; the former things are passed away." "He that overcometh shall inherit all these things." This last promise closely links the present with the future. How unjust to judge the present except in view of that glorious future! In the light of those perfect conditions which the program contains, who shall say that God will not be abundantly vindicated, or that His program is not the best possible?

VINDICATION OF IDEALS REALIZED

Probably the greatest mystery of all the ages and the one that has caused men most to complain of God's world, is the presence of so much physical suffering, due to poverty, sickness, slavery, accidents, epidemics, wars. If God is on the throne why do these evils continue? It does not fully satisfy to remind ourselves that most of the world's suffering is due to the sins of men, for in many in-

dividual cases suffering seems unavoidable and inescapable.

In a world of sin sorrow is a logical sequence. Unless the Divine program provides for a world measurably free from suffering we would be inclined to question the adequacy of the program. It is inspiring to know that the program does provide for this very thing. In the Kingdom Age, when Christ reigns in glory as "the King of Kings," blissful conditions will everywhere prevail. These are fully portrayed in the Psalms and in the Prophets; but we close with a single vindicating passage from the Apocalypse that portrays Kingdom-conditions: "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun strike upon them, nor any heat: for the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall be their shepherd, and shall guide them unto fountains of waters of life: and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes." Such are the ideal conditions of which men have dreamed in vain, but which the Divine program will achieve.

Chapter XX

THE PROGRAM ONE OF HOPE AND VICTORY

The charge of pessimism sometimes is brought against those who mention failure in connection with the program of God, or who call attention to things that look dark in the present conditions of society. People whose thinking has been dominated by human philosophy frequently are unable to recognize the persistence of evil in the world. To this class evils are only stepping stones to something greater and better. Everything is developing and constantly improving. Resident forces of themselves, if sufficient time is allowed, will produce an ideal society. This gilded optimism, in the face of approaching calamity, is quite as bad as blind pessimism in the face of much that is good.

OPTIMISM OF THE PROPHETS

One Monday morning a number of years ago the writer visited a meeting of ministers in a large eastern city, and listened to an interesting paper upon *The Optimism of the Prophets.* Nearly all the evidence was taken from the prophet Isaiah, who has

been fittingly called "the prophet of glory." Even in Isaiah, however, are many dark passages, which reveal awful and desperate conditions in society, and other passages which depict coming judgments because of the sins and apostasy of the nation. Then, too, we wondered why the writer of the paper did not quote from Jeremiah, "the weeping prophet." Was not Jeremiah also an optimist? Neither in the paper nor in the discussion that followed was any reference made to the pessimism of the prophets. Yet nobody can read the prophets without being impressed by their pessimism as well as their optimism.

Were the prophets optimistic? Surely. But the prophets of Israel were raised up by God in days of apostasy, and the burden of their messages was to call the people and the nation to repentance in view of approaching calamity on account of their sins. There was nothing optimistic in the messages of the prophets as they faced and denounced existing conditions. Yet the prophets were truly optimistic. Why? Because they knew that God's program looked beyond approaching judgments to a glowing future. Unto the prophets was revealed what God purposed to do for His people and for the world in "the latter days." Thus were the prophets sustained and thus were the people encouraged. No true optimism can be securely based upon the interminable processes of naturalistic evolution and the

visionary improvement schemes of men. Optimism that is not doomed to disappointment rests only upon the unfolding purposes of God.

OPTIMISM OF CHRIST AND THE APOSTLES

How faithfully Christ exposed and denounced the sins of the scribes and the Pharisees! How He lamented the doom of the privileged cities of Bethsaida, Chorazin, and Capernaum, wept over impenitent Jerusalem, foretold her coming destruction and the world-wide scatterment of the Jews! How pessimistic the outlook! But was Christ a pessimist or an optimist? Truly an optimist, because the program for the future was His own program. He knew what was to follow His own judgments. He knew the power of the Gospel, and He knew also the time of "the consummation," when He should return and restore and renew mankind. His Kingdom was surely coming. He would see to it that it did. His outlook was truly optimistic.

Likewise the apostles. Although they foresaw the present age filled with shadows, especially at its close, the dominant note in their message was the note of victory. When persecuted they rejoiced; in prison they sang. Always cheerful, never daunted, never defeated, they spoke of future reward and of reigning in glory. No book is more optimistic than the New Testament; yet no book speaks more cer-

tainly of disintegrating elements at work in society, which will terminate naturally in coming doom and world catastrophe. But catastrophe is not the end of the Divine program.

MEANING OF THE GOSPEL

While Christ portrayed a coming time of tribulation that would surpass in severity and extent any former period of judgment, and while this note of coming doom is present in the writings of all of the Apostles, yet the Gospel message as a whole is fitly characterized as a message of "good news." Such it truly is. Good news for the present: God is love. Christ has died and risen again. A message of salvation is freely offered to all mankind, a message of present joy, present peace, and present victory. Nobody needs to perish. All may have everlasting life. Good news for both the present and future. Tribulation, sorrow, anguish will come, but out of all these will emerge an era of universal blessing and glory. Because we are in God's keeping no evil can befall us, for God is overruling all things for our good. Not a single note of pessimism here. Although we may be "hated of all men," and be persecuted even to "the loss of all things," like Paul, nevertheless the consciousness of God's presence now and belief in His blessed promises pertaining to the future make the Gospel mes-

sage the most optimistic message in the world. It is the world's only hope.

THE PÆAN OF VICTORY

It is said that the music of paganism is all in the minor key. When we hear it we listen to the dirge, to the wail of men set to music. At best it is plaintive, like some of the Hawaiian music. But music that gets its inspiration from the Bible and from the Christians' personal experiences of God, strikes the major key. Who but the Christian can sing the full-throated notes of victory? This is all because he is part of a victorious program. He is assured of future and final victory both because God has promised it, and because he has present foretaste of it in his own daily experience.

THE NEAR OUTLOOK

Certain near outlooks are far from encouraging. The recent great World War rudely shocked the calm assurance that civilization was almost Christianized. The wild ferociousness of sin broke out anew and rioted furiously. The savage in man reappeared. The Hun lived again! Notwithstanding the horrors and the frightful lessons of war the nations of Europe have not yet settled back into the ways of peace. Millions of money are being squan-

dered upon armies and upon further preparations for war that should be devoted to settling war-debts, to honest industries, and to the causes of education and religion. The so-called peace seems more like a prolonged truce, with each nation fearful, distrustful, hating, and secretly preparing for the next world-war.

The historical review of the past is also far from reassuring. One of the saddest and most disheartening things in history is that lands once Christianized have fallen into the hands of Moslem, Arab, or Turk, or have become dominated by a perverted Christianity. Why is it? How can it be possible? Yet these are the facts. The only explanation seems to be that just as God raised up heathen nations to punish apostate Israel, so God chastises His Church when she becomes decadent and loses her spiritual power.

VICTORY POSSIBLE

Many disquieting features in the world of today might be mentioned. Our hearts will not be filled with assurance as we look at them. We must look rather to God and to His revealed program. God knows far better than we the forces that are undermining civilization, even threatening its destruction; but He knows also His own plans and agencies which will assuredly prevent complete

catastrophe, and which will establish perfect world-order in the age that shall follow this one. Human solutions for present perplexing human problems are inadequate. They are doomed to failure. Only as we turn more and more to God and to His all-sufficient program will hope be quickened and courage strengthened; remembering that "nothing is too hard for God," and that He ever has the situation well in hand, however desperate it may appear to us. Human schemes will fail, but our God cannot possibly be defeated.

VICTORY PROMISED

From the day that God said to Adam and Eve that the Seed of the woman should bruise Satan's head, victory has been the dominant note in the program. It has resounded all through the ages. From generation to generation God's people have sung His victories. God frequently renewed His promises and entered into far-reaching covenants with Abraham, Moses, David, and other chosen and trusted followers. He also raised up the prophets who reminded the Chosen Nation of God's purposes, and appealed to the people for fuller coöperation. In spite of dungeon, fire, and sword, God's people have held fast to the ultimate victory promised by Him.

When Christ came the promises of God took on

a fuller realization. His coming kindled a new hope, gave a new outlook, inspired a new devotion to God. In Him all of the previous promises of God centered and through Him all are to have their fulfilment. He clarified them, enlarged them, filled them with new meaning, and added others still more precious. If we should consider only the promises of Christ to the overcomers in His letters to the Seven Churches, we could not fail to be inspired with every assurance of final victory. The promises of God are also the purposes of God. For example, when our Lord taught His disciples to pray, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven," it was because a realized earthly Kingdom of God was a part of the program.

VICTORY PROCURED

When we consider that victory for the world-program was promised by One who clearly foresaw all of the difficulties between the plan conceived and the program completed, we can have absolute faith in the coming triumph of Christ. While "now we see not yet all things subjected to him," we can still rejoice in certain victory. We have only to call to mind the victories of God in all of the preceding great world-crises to know that in the approaching world-crisis God will triumph again. The agents and agencies of God will be found fully adequate for

the great world-crises of the future. Carefully chosen men and the "angels of his power," together with all of the unseen and all-powerful forces, both celestial and terrestrial, will carry forward the world-program to complete victory.

THE NEED FOR SUCH A PROGRAM

The need for such a program as we have been considering with all its vastness, scope, and complexities, a veritable program of programs, is apparent to all who ponder upon the mysteries of history and seek a rational explanation of conditions as they exist to-day. Only such a program affords an adequate solution for all the problems of life. Nothing short of the Divine program will eliminate evil from the world and transform it into a paradise of God.

Such a comprehensive and extended program was needed also to demonstrate forever the insufficiency and failure of man apart from God. This demonstration must be so thorough that in all the ages to come man will never again question the love and the wisdom of God and man's absolute dependence upon Him. Such an extended program has been absolutely necessary in order to permit man through many attempts at self-government to come to the end of his resources and be willing to acknowledge both

the goodness and the supremacy of the all-loving and almighty God.

The program was needed further for man's own guidance. God did not leave man to find his way alone in the dark. In each great crisis God revealed to man what was expected of him in his own day and generation, and marked out the way he should take in order to arrive at a successful end. Man, unaided, could never have discovered this for himself. The Divine plans needed to be divinely revealed. The very justice of God demanded that He must needs take man into His counsels, and this God ever has shown himself ready to do.

Finally such a program of victory was necessary in order to keep hope alive in the hearts of God's people in days that are dark. Man of himself, however strong, is a dependent creature. He frequently comes to the end of his resources. He needs the inspiration of a hope that lures him on to victory. Knowing God and being acquainted with His program of triumph we are strengthened to endure and to press courageously onward. The work may be hard, the way dark, but the outcome certain; the trials sore, but the release final; the temptations fierce, but victory assured; death nearing, but eternal bliss awaiting. Whatever the gloom or despair of the present it is light on ahead. The goal is glorious. The program is of God and

the consummation of all things is in His hands. He is pledged to victory. He will triumph gloriously. Our cause is His cause. The Divine world-program is certain of complete triumph because the Kingdom of God will surely come.

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